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## **THE TWO WORLDS**





AT THE POPE'S CASTLE

# THE TWO WORLDS

BY

PRINCIPAL S. N. AGARWAL



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# CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I FROM DELHI EASTWARDS	1
II CHINA IN DISTRESS	4
III TEN DAYS IN NIPPON	11
IV JAPAN NEEDS A GANDHI	18
V HONOLULU: 'A PARADISE ON EARTH'	25
VI GLIMPSES OF THE UNITED STATES	29
VII ILLUSIONS AND DISILLUSIONS	40
VIII DEMOCRACY IN UNCLE SAM'S OWN HOME	46
IX AMERICA ADMIRES GANDHI	52
X INTERVIEW WITH PROF. EINSTEIN	59
XI PEARL BUCK GIVES A WARNING	64
XII AN HOUR WITH PROF. JOHN DEWEY	69
XIII GOOD OLD ENGLAND	73
XIV HAROLD LASKI DISCUSSES INDIAN PROBLEMS	79
XV PROSPEROUS BELGIUM: A VISIT TO WATERLOO	84
XVI A WEEK IN PARIS: AT THE UNESCO	88
XVII EDUCATIONAL CONGRESS AT BERNE: RIGHTS AND DUTIES	93
XVIII SWITZERLAND FOLLOWS GANDHI	97
XIX THREE DAYS AT CAUX: MORAL RE-ARMAMENT	107
XX IN THE LAND OF HITLER	112
XXI A PEEP BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: CZECHOSLOVAKIA GOES "RED"	119

Chapter		Page
XXII	A TRIP TO VIENNA ...	127
XXIII	ON WAY TO ROME: THE ETERNAL CITY	130
XXIV	MUSSOLINI'S DREAM OF AN EMPIRE ...	136
XXV	WE MEET THE POPE....	140
XXVI	ATHENS: THE CITY OF SOCRATES ...	145
XXVII	KAMAL PASHA'S TURKEY ...	151
XXVIII	IN PAKISTAN'S CAPITAL ...	156
XXIX	BACK TO DELHI ...	160
XXX	THE TWO WORLDS ...	164

# I

## FROM DELHI EASTWARDS

ON THE 17th of April 1949, my wife and I left the Willingdon Airport, New Delhi, in an aircraft of the Bharat Airways. Originally we were scheduled to board a Flying Clipper of the Pan American World Airways; but a last-minute change had to be made in our programme because the American Skymaster was unavoidably delayed owing to inclement weather. This was the beginning of our whirlwind tour round the world at a time when the East was yet groaning under the civil war and the West which had not yet recovered from the devastation of the last global holocaust, was making hectic preparations for a third world war of unprecedented fury and ruin.

Ever since the achievement of political freedom by India on the 15th August 1947, I had been strongly feeling that it would not be possible to work for any radical changes in the atmosphere of the country without first overhauling our entire educational system. Since I have myself been closely connected with several educational institutions, I wished to obtain first-hand information on the latest developments in education in different countries of the world which could be profitably employed in our country. Of course, the educational organization of a country has to be in the nature of an organic growth; it cannot be transplanted from one country to another without reference to its indigenous culture and traditions. But it is essential to be constantly in touch with the experiments in education that are carried on in other

parts of the world. In addition, I was desirous of observing for myself the reactions of different peoples of the world to the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. The glowing and spontaneous tributes that were showered on the Mahatma after his <sup>voluntary self-sacrifice</sup> assassination clearly indicated the extent of the influence that he exercised over the Western world. It was also my intention to study closely the trends towards decentralization in the economic and political spheres in America and the European countries, particularly after the last War. We carried with us literature on the Sarvodaya Samaj because it had been decided to popularize its ideals in the East as well as in the West.

A day before starting on our tour we went to pay our respects to Rajaji, Pandit Nehru, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel. They blessed our plans and gave us advice and suggestions. "Will you also deliver lectures in America and Europe?" asked Rajaji turning to my wife. "I can only speak in Hindi, for which the foreign countries will have no use!" she replied. "But your husband will act as your interpreter," remarked Rajaji, and without waiting for my reactions, added: "Otherwise, what are husbands meant for?" We all laughed. As we took his leave to depart, he patted us affectionately on the back and said: "Go and get a good name!"

The first stage of our journey from Delhi to Calcutta was by no means pleasant: the weather was very warm and therefore 'bumpy'. The plane landed at several places on the way and the landings were naturally uncomfortable. Yet both of us stood the journey pretty well and reached the Dum Dum Airport in the evening. At Calcutta, the

Travel Agency was to hand over to us our passports with the necessary visas. But there was some confusion and misunderstanding somewhere and we were, consequently, put to considerable inconvenience. After making frantic efforts to secure the passports, we got them only at the aerodrome, just a few minutes before the plane was due to leave for Shanghai. This was, undoubtedly, the worst experience in the course of our whole tour. But, after a lot of worry and excitement, when we finally occupied our seats in the American Skymaster at the Dum Dum Airport, I heaved a sigh of relief. Fortunately, the weather was quite favourable during the night, and after short halts at Bangkok and Hongkong, the aircraft landed at Shanghai the next evening.



## II

### CHINA IN DISTRESS

I HAD definitely included China in my educational and cultural tour round the world. But it was very doubtful whether the existing political situation in China would ultimately allow me to break my journey at Shanghai. Sardar K. M. Panikkar, Indian Ambassador in China, was travelling with us in the same plane from Calcutta, and he too was not sure about the advisability of staying in China under the prevailing circumstances. But several friends from the Indian Embassy and Consulate-General's office in Shanghai met us at the airport and their verdict was in favour of taking a 'risk'. We therefore decided to break our journey, though only for three days.

Shanghai is a very big city with a population of about 8 millions. It is cosmopolitan in character, inhabited by Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Britons, besides people of other nationalities including about 600 Indians, mostly petty businessmen or Sikh guards. Though a big city, Shanghai does not reflect the true and ancient culture of the Chinese people. It has hardly any institutions giving an insight into the real China. I had the opportunity of visiting the University of Shanghai and meeting its learned President Dr Henry Lin. But the University is run by Christian Missionaries of America and shows scant regard for Chinese cultural traditions. The Fudan University which I visited later is more Chinese in character. Many Professors in these Universities are American or British and it is very curious that the

Chinese have still to go to America or England for their post-graduate studies. The education in China ends at the graduation stage.

I was particularly interested in the question of the medium of instruction in China, and it was gratifying to know that technical terms in almost all the academic subjects including natural and physical sciences had already been coined in the Chinese language and were being used for University instruction. But the corresponding English or international terms are also indicated within brackets to avoid any possibility of confusion during the period of transition. The English and American professors in the Chinese Universities freely use the English language in their lectures. But the Chinese professors teach their classes through the language of the country. English, however, continues to be a compulsory language up to the High School stage and the first year of the University; it is elective afterwards in a group of foreign languages including French, German, and Spanish. The Chinese script is pictorial in character; it consists of as many as six thousand symbols. In order to reform the script, *hirakana* and *katakana* characters are being used along with the old *kanchi* script. But such reforms are always very slow and China is no exception to this general rule. It is, however, interesting for us to know that, despite the stupendous difficulties of the script in China, there are no attempts at introducing the Roman script.

The Chinese students have always taken a leading part in the political movements of China. At the time of my visit, I could easily see how the students were intimately connected with the conflict between the Nationalists

and the Communists. The Chinese youth are divided into distinct political camps: the Communist, or the Kuomintang or the Christian. They have adopted the European dress completely.

I had the opportunity of meeting a number of Chinese intellectuals during my short stay in Shanghai. Dr Lin Tung Chi, Professor of Political Science in the Fudan University and Director of Haikwang Library of Western Thought, invited me to speak at a select gathering of those who were interested in India and Mahatma Gandhi. I pleaded for closer cultural ties between India and China and the same sentiment was voiced earnestly by several Chinese friends. A majority of the population being Buddhist, there are many common factors in the ancient culture of the two countries. But the Chinese mind is torn between the two conflicting ideologies of Confucianism which teaches the ideal of duty, and Taoism which emphasizes personal freedom.

The World Buddhist Mission invited me to address them on the Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Dr Zee, the President of the Mission, expressed deep appreciation of Gandhiji's teachings which, in his opinion, were very similar to Buddhist ideals. He hoped that Gandhi's India would help China in rediscovering her old culture and that the two ancient countries will join hands in establishing peace and spirituality in the war-weary world. Dr Zee was happy to know about the Sarvodaya Samaj as a kind of International Gandhian Brotherhood and readily registered himself as a member.

The distress in China was most acute in the economic sphere. The inflationary spiral was working havoc. A

few months before our arrival the Chinese Government was forced to scrap the then existing currency and introduce a new one called the Gold Yuan. In the beginning, one American dollar was equivalent to four Chinese Yuan or dollars. The day I reached Shanghai, one American dollar could be exchanged for 2,00,000 Chinese dollars; the next day the rate was 3,00,000. The day after, one American dollar was worth 4,00,000 Chinese dollars. The Manager of the Hotel, therefore, insisted that his bills should be paid every day, and, if possible, every morning and evening. An ordinary breakfast would cost about five lakhs of Chinese dollars. Chinese notes of the denomination of 10,000 or even 50,000 had scarcely any value in the market. A small nail in my portfolio which was sent for minor repairs cost me twenty thousand Chinese dollars. A note of fifty thousand dollars was the minimum 'tip' that had to be put into the hands of the liftman or the hotel boy. Bundles of notes were carried openly like newspapers or files. There was no danger of their being stolen or snatched away because hardly anybody would even care to look at them. Thus, in China of those days, almost everybody was a millionaire or a multi-millionaire. The Nationalist Government had failed miserably in many respects, but had at least succeeded in turning the people into millionaires. How comic and also tragic, specially for the middle classes whose salaries had not been touched by the 'miracle'!

The Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek had completely broken down. Its orders and laws did not command respect or obedience. Silver dollars which had ceased to be legal tender were being openly exchanged in

the streets for these bundles of Chinese dollars. The rules of public traffic were respected more in breach than observance. This was natural when high Government officials themselves did not show any respect for the State laws and regulations. Inefficiency, corruption, nepotism and disloyalty were rampant, and, consequently, the Government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was thoroughly unpopular. People were favouring the Communist regime not because they had any particular love for its ideology but because they were tired of the existing Government and longed for a change. A number of professors and educated persons in China expressed to me their sincere doubt about the possibility of Communism making much headway in their country. The innate individualism of the Chinese people, in their opinion, was the greatest hurdle in the way of Communist success. Communism cannot take deep roots in a country which is intrinsically individualistic by nature. I was also told that the Chinese Communists were not under the direct influence of the Soviet 'Reds'; they had assumed this name in order to win the sympathy and help of both the U. S. S. R. and the Chinese masses and that one of the reasons why the British and American Governments had not helped the Nationalist forces against the Communists to the extent they were expected to, was that the Western Powers were hopeful about the possibility of the new Communist regime siding with the Anglo-American Bloc in international politics. When I heard this view in Shanghai, I felt very doubtful about its truth and wisdom, and subsequent events have clearly shown that it was entirely mistaken. But will

Communism succeed in consolidating power in a country like China, so full of warring individual and group interests?

As I was deeply interested in the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives or the 'Indusco' movement, I got in touch with a few persons who were connected with this work. Mr Peter Townsend, one of the important persons in the International Service of Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, was very helpful in supplying me the required information. He told me how only 320 co-operatives were functioning in Nationalist China at that time. The Indusco movement had suffered a severe setback after the war, particularly due to internal conflict and economic dislocation. I was surprised to know from Mr Townsend that the Industrial Co-operatives were more popular and better organized in Communist China because, as realists, the Communist Party had understood the inherent merits of the Indusco movement in a country like China which suffers from over-population, unemployment and, what is more, under-employment. China lacks capital and transport facilities. Under these circumstances, the Industrial Co-operatives on a small and decentralized basis serve a very useful purpose in the national economy. It was also interesting to know that the Induscos had manufactured a 12-spindle *charkha* or spinning-wheel which had proved to be quite efficient and productive. I tried to secure more information about this *charkha*, but Mr Townsend was unable to show me the designs or even sketches because it was impossible to obtain them from the countryside owing to the Civil War which had been raging quite close to Shanghai.

Next morning, I received a warning from the Indian Consulate that Shanghai was in the danger zone and we must leave the city by the first plane. Accordingly, we asked the Pan American Airways to book two seats for us the same day, and, fortunately, we succeeded in getting accommodation. And so we were forced to leave China for Japan after a short three days' stay, although we had planned to stay longer and visit the countryside to observe the Chinese people in their rural setting. As we left Shanghai for Tokyo I felt very sad about this great country. The Chinese people are intelligent, resourceful and of hoary cultural traditions. They are perhaps, like Indians, deficient in civic sense and national solidarity. We Indians ought to learn a timely lesson from China. We must learn to put in hard work in a disciplined manner, and cannot afford to be complacent about the future. India like China has had a glorious Past. But the glorious past without an active Present cannot produce a bright Future.

### III

#### TEN DAYS IN NIPPON

IT WAS, indeed, with very great difficulty that we could enter Japan, or Nippon as the Japanese call it in their own language, en route to the United States. According to the existing rules, the Government of India can recommend only businessmen for entry into Japan. The administration of Japan, specially foreign trade and tourist traffic, is entirely in the hands of the SCAP (Supreme Command of Allied Powers) authorities, who are naturally very cautious and vigilant about foreign nationals entering the 'occupied' territory. Since I was not out for a business tour, the Government of India felt helpless in the matter. They told me only a few days before my departure that, according to the latest regulations of the SCAP, we could secure their permission if the Japanese Travel Bureau booked our seats in advance for a week's tour of Nippon. The Japanese Travel Bureau is the only official travel agency in Japan, and if they undertake to keep an eye on the foreign visitors, the Military authorities do not worry any further. We, therefore, requested the Pan American Airways at Shanghai to send a cable to the Travel Bureau in Tokyo for booking our seats. The reply, unfortunately, was in the negative, and we were told that tickets for a tour of Japan could be available only during the next week. It was impossible for us to stay in Shanghai a day longer because the Indian Consulate-General's office had given us a definite warning to leave China within a few hours. So we felt extremely



disappointed because both of us were very keen on visiting the beautiful land of Nippon about which we had heard and read so much since childhood. We, naturally, felt that without touring Japan our world tour would not be complete. The Skymaster landed at the Tokyo Airport after a very rough journey. It was dusk and my wife felt very uncomfortable on account of air-sickness. Fortunately for us we met an important official of the Indian Liaison Mission in Tokyo at the Airport. When we expressed our cherished desire to break our journey in Japan, he 'phoned to the SCAP office and, through the influence of an important Military officer, succeeded in securing the necessary 'clearance' for us. We were very kindly treated as the guests of the Indian Liaison Mission which corresponds, more or less, to the Indian Embassies in other countries. The Indian Mission is quite popular in Japan, although it forms a part of the SCAP, because India was the first to withdraw her armed forces from Occupied Nippon. Another cause of India's popularity was the recent judgement of Justice Pal in connexion with the trial of War Criminals including Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan during the last War. Justice Pal's remarks were strongly against the death penalty and had evoked a wave of sympathy and sentiment for India throughout the land.

As the Japanese Travel Bureau could not arrange for a week's tour in time, we could extend our stay in Nippon and spend ten days in all in that beautiful country. During our tour, we visited important places like Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, Osaka, Nara, Kamakura, Hakone Lake, Atami and Nikko. Tokyo, the capital of Nippon,

is a city of long distances with a population of about 5 millions. About half the buildings in Tokyo are still lying in ruins caused by war bombing. But small wooden houses have sprung up during the last five years of 'occupation'. It is wrong to imagine that all the buildings in Japan are made of wood: there are also huge brick and stone structures in big cities throughout the country. These buildings are, of course, quake-proof. The places of interest in Tokyo are the Imperial Palace, of which the interior is not open to the public, the Ueno Park which is noted for its beautiful cherry blossoms in spring and which also contains the National Museum, the Zoological Gardens and the National Art Gallery, the Tsukiji Honganji Temple which is a large earthquake- and fire-proof edifice built in ancient Indian style and decorated in a harmonious blend of ancient and modern technique; the Tokyo University which has been deprived of its prefix 'Imperial' after the occupation; the artistic building of Diet, the Japanese National Parliament; and lastly, the magnificent Library of the Diet which was formerly used by the Emperor as his Palace and which is an exact replica of the Buckingham Palace in London. When I saw the Library building for the first time, I was really surprised how I could be standing before the Buckingham Palace of London on the soil of Japan: even the iron railings and the gate had been copied with meticulous care. It was interesting to see how the Japanese had tried to ape Britain in all respects before the last World War.

Kyoto was the capital of Japan till 1868, and its Old Imperial Palace is a remarkable example of Japanese

architecture. Even when the capital was moved to Tokyo, the Emperors continued to be enthroned in this Palace. We were able to see this Palace from inside and were struck with the simplicity but natural grandeur of its big halls with large mats on the floors and artistic flower-vases decorating the rooms. Huge paintings of former Emperors and their Ancestors hung on the walls, especially in the Prayer Hall. Kyoto is a classic city, rich in historic association and legendary lore, and the big temples and shrines still attest to its old glory and splendour. Of the 3,000 temples and shrines that once existed in Kyoto and its environs, more than a thousand still remain.

A visit to Kamakura was in the nature of a pilgrimage because I had heard much about the famous Daibutsu or the Great Buddha which is the most impressive bronze image of its kind in the world. This superb, silently eloquent image was erected in 1252 and its dimensions are approximately: height 42 feet 6 inches; circumference 97 feet; length of face 8 feet; width of eyes 3 feet 6 inches. The image was originally enclosed in a large building, but this was damaged by a storm in 1369 and was finally carried away by a tidal wave in 1495. Since then the figure has remained in the open. Many of the foundation stones that supported the pillars of the building may yet be seen in their original positions. The silver boss on the forehead of the image weighs 30 lbs. and the image itself 92 tons. By a staircase inside the image one can reach its shoulders. The expression on the face admirably depicts the perfect repose and passionless calm that are associated with Buddha's personality.

Mt. Fuji, the highest mountain in Nippon, is known all over the world for its flawless beauty and almost spiritual splendour. To the Japanese, it is the symbol of national unity and is therefore worshipped by them as their Imperial emblem of Divinity. Its snow-capped cone rises to a height of about 12,500 ft. above sea-level, and its base circumference is 63 millimeters. At the foot of the mountain lie the noted Fuji lakes of which the Hakone Lake is the most famous for its beautiful natural surroundings. During our tour we had the good luck of lunching at the Fuji-View Hotel on the Hakone Lake. The weather was very clear and sunny that day, and the splendid view of the Fuji from a side of the lake through tall green trees was an unforgettable experience. Atami, which we could visit the same evening, is a favourite year-round hot-spring resort noted for its salubrious climate and beautiful scenery.

The last and by far the best place that we visited in Japan was Nikko. I remembered to have read a good account of this place in one of my English text-books. Nikko is one of the well-known National Parks of Japan where we see an exquisite harmony of natural beauty and architectural splendour, the natural beauty consisting of lakes, waterfalls, rivers, gorges, plateaus and hot springs scattered over a vast thickly wooded area, and the architectural splendour represented by a group of ancient temples and shrines. The variety of Nikko's beautiful scenery is mainly due to the volcanic nature of the region. In the centre of the District, for example, stands Mt. Nantai, 8,000 ft. high, of volcanic origin, whose conic shape of perfect symmetry is mirrored in the emerald

waters of lake Chuzenji. And in describing the architectural wonders of Nikko, one often falls back on the popular saying in Japan: "Don't say *Kekko* (magnificent) until you have seen Nikko." The Toshogu Shrine, for example, is one of dazzling splendour and artistic fineness with its many and varied structures including edifices, pagodas, gates and treasure halls, all being gorgeously painted, in truth, an architectural triumph of old Japan.

To give an idea of the domestic and social life of Japan, the Japanese houses, generally built of wood, have their floors covered with '*tatami*' or thick padded reed mats with hardly any modern furniture. The rooms are separated from one another by paper screens or sliding doors. The windows and openings are very wide so that one whole side and sometimes two or three sides of the house could be opened up. The openings are shut at night by artistic sliding doors of thin boards. In one of the main rooms is prominently placed a statue of the family Ancestor who is regularly worshipped by the members of the family. The tea ceremony, which is one of the outstanding features of Japanese social and cultural life, is also performed in this room before the statue or painting of the Ancestor. Shintoism which is a compound of nature-worship and ancestor-worship is thus a very popular religion in Japan. So far as nature-worship is concerned, a landscape garden is an essential feature of a Japanese house. They have reduced the art of arranging flowers in their houses to an exact science. Their national dress, Kimono, is extremely colourful and artistic. It is a pity that, under the impact of Western culture, it is rapidly disappearing from the national life of Nippon.

Japan is also a land of festivals and national celebrations which add colour and beauty to their social life. We were lucky to be there in April as this is a good time for festivals and we could witness some of them. The *Mame-maki* or 'bean-throwing ceremony', the *Hina Matsuri* or 'doll festival', the *Tango-no-sekku* or 'boy's festival' and the *Hana Matsuri* or 'the floral festival' are the more important ones. In the domain of art and dancing, the *Geisha* and *Kabuki* dances and plays are indeed remarkable. We had a chance to see one of the Kabuki plays in Tokyo; it was really a sumptuous feast for the eyes.

The Japanese countryside, with flowers of various hues and fields full of colourful crops, looks like a vast well-laid-out garden. The high mountains, green valleys and blue lakes throughout the land of Nippon present a very picturesque appearance. Added to the rich beauty of Nature and the artistic creations of man in Japan is the sweet courtesy of the people in every walk of life, for Nippon is by far the most courteous nation on earth today.

## IV

### JAPAN NEEDS A GANDHI

JAPAN is certainly a great country. But we were very sorry to see her sad plight under the present SCAP administration. Wherever we went we found all good hotels, restaurants, and Departmental Stores closed to the 'Japanese Nationals'. Even the 'toilet' and 'rest rooms' in offices are 'off limits' to the local Japanese employees. The Allied Forces run special buses and trams for their personnel, and even though they go empty while the ordinary buses and trams for the local population overflow with passengers, the Japanese are strictly prohibited from using the Allied Transport. Foreign visitors are not allowed to mix with the 'natives', and if the Japanese try to do so, the SCAP swoops down on them with an iron hand. Even the smallest articles manufactured in Japan have to bear the label 'Made in *Occupied Japan*' to remind the people both inside and outside that these Islands are no longer politically free. The Emperor has been forced to renounce his Divinity and systematic attempts are made to diminish his prestige with his own people. The new MacArthur Constitution has set up a 'puppet' Government, and a national Diet consisting of the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives. But no important bill can come before the Diet unless it is 'blessed' and even drafted by SCAP. Under the Constitution, Japan cannot have any Armed Forces on land or sea or in the air; her navy and air-force at the end of the war were literally cut to pieces by the American military.







IN THE TSUKIJI HONGANJI TEMPLE, TOKYO

authorities. The 'No War' Constitution lays down that Japan shall not participate in any future wars; thus Pacifism has been forced down the throats of the Japanese against their will. I do not, however, mean that the people in Japan are unrepentant as they are in Germany. The average Japanese sincerely feels that his country went astray by running counter to the great teachings of Lord Buddha, and is, therefore, suffering from political slavery and racial domination. He realizes that Japan is tasting the fruits of her own Imperialistic policy during the last two decades. They were defeated by the superior violence of the Allied Nations in the form of the Atom Bomb, and, therefore, have nothing to complain of.

In the name of 'democracy', the Americans are trying to uproot the indigenous culture and religion of Japan. The MacArthur regime has prepared detailed plans to convert the Japanese masses to Christianity within the next two or three decades. Millions of dollars are being spent over this 'conquest of culture' against which I did raise my humble voice in the course of a lecture delivered in the Honganji Temple of Tokyo. The educational system of Japan is being overhauled in order to 'democratize' Japanese young boys and girls. Co-education, Western dress and manners, more emphasis on the English language and the study of American history and culture are some of the ways in which the Japanese educational system is being made more 'democratic' by the Allied Powers. The saddest feature of the whole story is that the Japanese young men and women have gone crazy after the American young soldiers and imitate their way of life in order to please the 'new rulers'. The elderly folk are

reluctant to speak out frankly in regard to this degradation among the youth of their country, because they are afraid of the SCAP administration. But, in their heart of hearts, they burn with rage and indignation. In the course of my address to the International Culture Society and the Gandhi Society of Japan, I earnestly appealed to the Japanese young boys and girls not to forget their own culture and traditions of art, beauty and spirituality. But if the Japanese youngmen continue to behave as at present, it is certain that the great Asian country of Japan will be reduced to a 'glorified colony' of the United States within a decade or two. It also appears certain that in case of a third world war, America will declare Japan at war with the U.S.S.R., as the British Government did for India during the last War. The Japanese will then be asked to fight the Russians on the Asian mainland and the 'No War' Constitution of 'Democratic' Japan will vanish into thin air, giving place to Military Dictatorship. The Korean conflict testifies to my view.

The economic condition of the Japanese is deplorable. There is wide-spread unemployment owing to the destruction of their industries during the last War. The bombed factories have not been reconstructed partly because the Americans are not at all interested in reviving Japanese industries and certainly the Japanese Government have not the means to rehabilitate old industries. Still, hard-working and patriotic as they are, the Japanese are straining every nerve to increase their industrial production through their wide-spread and efficient cottage or 'home' industries. Besides hard work on his farm, the Japanese farmer utilizes his leisure hours in plying small,

handy and cheap machines for manufacturing numerous cottage products like toys, bamboo baskets and mats, silk cloth, pottery, lacquer-ware and other articles for world consumption. Japan's neat and artistic villages are beehives of productive activity throughout the year. I got information about several types of the spinning-wheel which have been found to be more productive than the Indian *Charkha*. Several other kinds of small and efficient machines are being employed in agricultural and domestic industries in Japan. We in India would do well to manufacture such machines for improving the lot of our own villages. It is gratifying to know that the Government of India have secured a number of Japanese technicians to impart training to Indian technicians in different cottage industries.

Another important feature of Japanese industries is the employment of girls in many factories. Young girls between the ages of 18 and 22 work hard in different types of factories in order to earn sufficient money for their marriage. I was able to visit several factories in Japan where almost all the labour consisted of such girls. They have proved to be very efficient and very honest workers. Electric power is very cheap in Japan, and very largely decentralized so that each cluster of villages surrounding a mountain can have a separate hydro-electric plant of its own.

So far as I could find out, the employment of girls in factories did not lead to any deterioration in morals. Sex morality is very strict in Japan and any laxity is severely punished by society. That is why co-education was not much prevalent in Japan before the Occupation.

Now it is being introduced by the SCAP in the name of 'democracy' and freedom.

In order to achieve self-sufficiency in food, the Japanese peasants are trying to utilize literally every inch of land for intensive cultivation. After the last War, about six million refugees have come back to Japan from China and other neighbouring islands. The whole rural economy has consequently been dislocated. Nevertheless, the Japanese farmers are putting in very hard work for meeting the crisis. The mountains, the sandy shores and all land up to six inches of railway lines are being used for growing more food. Most of the cultivation is done by hand without the help of either bullocks, horses, or tractors. India has to learn much from Japan in this respect because she too must obtain self-sufficiency in food. The per acre productivity in Japan, it is instructive to know, is three times that in India. Partly to help Japan in overcoming the food crisis and partly to check the spread of Communism, the SCAP administration has introduced far-reaching land reforms by doing away with feudal landlords in Japan.

In the post-War period, the educational system of Japan has been modelled mostly on the American pattern. According to the new system, the school years are six for primary schools, three for secondary schools, three for high schools and four for colleges and universities. All education in schools is controlled by the SCAP, being partly entrusted to local public bodies such as prefectural councils, towns and villages. There are about 58 Universities in Japan, state, public and private, of which the Tokyo University is the oldest. The medium of

instruction up to the highest stage is the Japanese language, although Latin terms are freely used within brackets in college and university text-books. Japanese technical terms are being rapidly standardized in both physical and social sciences. The English language is compulsory in high schools but elective in the Universities. Before the war, the Japanese young men and women hated the English language; now they are 'crazy' about it.

In Tokyo I had an opportunity to meet a number of distinguished Japanese professors, members of the Diet, a few ex-Ministers, and also some co-workers of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. I asked them as to how they expected Japan to become free from political bondage. "Very hard to tell!" was the common answer. Despite occasional talk about the Peace Treaty, the end of 'Occupation' by the American Military is not in sight. The culture and genius of the Japanese people are slowly but surely crumbling down. Under these circumstances, the only hope for Japan lies in the Gandhian Technique of self-purification and *Satyagraha*. The Japanese are a very well-disciplined nation; they are extremely honest and hard-working. They possess a keen sense of public duty and patriotism. But I sincerely feel that they committed a grave error in following the policy of Imperialistic aggression during the last one or two decades. Japan must renounce war and aggression once and for all, not as a matter of expediency but as a fundamental creed of her national life. I feel she must follow the teachings of the Buddha and of Mahatma Gandhi, to achieve her political as well as spiritual freedom. There seems to be no other way. It is significant that a Gandhi

Society has been formed in Japan whose membership already runs to fifty thousand. Rev. Riri Nakayama, its energetic Secretary and one of the delegates to the recent World Pacifist Conference held in India, has been doing admirable work for the spread of Gandhian ideals of peace and non-violence in Japan. He showed me thousands of forms voluntarily signed by the Japanese, in which they had expressed repentance for their cruelties to the people of China and other neighbouring countries and had pledged themselves to truth and non-violence. The people of Japan are peace-loving by nature and the teachings of the Buddha had instilled in them the ideals of *Ahimsa* (Non-violence) during the past several centuries. But their military leaders led them astray and now all suffer the consequences. Dr Kora, a distinguished member of the Japanese Diet, has also been doing good work for peace in Japan; she attended the World Pacifist Conference and took deep interest in the technique of *Satyagraha*. Several other important Japanese in Tokyo asked me a number of questions about the active and dynamic non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi which helped India to wrest political freedom from the British without shedding blood. Their interest in Gandhiji's teachings and philosophy of action was real and practical, because they are now faced with the same problem of freedom from foreign rule.

Japan is, undoubtedly, a great country. She possesses sterling qualities of head and heart. But today she needs a Gandhi to pull her out of the mire. May a Gandhi soon be born in Japan to win for her not only political but, what is much more, spiritual and moral salvation!

## V

### HONOLULU: 'A PARADISE ON EARTH'

WE LEFT Tokyo on the night of the 30th April and reached the Wake Islands on the morning of 1st May. After breakfast, we again started on our air travel, this time to the Hawaiian Islands. Our air hostess soon informed us that we would be crossing the International Date Line and thereby gaining one day. Of course, I had read about this Date Line in my school geography; but it was a thrilling experience to actually cross it. After a few minutes a bulletin went round that the International Date Line had been crossed and watches were to be put back. So it was again the 30th April. We were asked to sign our names with our home addresses so that Certificates from 'Father Time' might be sent to us in due course. On returning from the world tour, we were greatly amused to receive two romantic and picturesque certificates from 'the Imperial Realms of Father Time' and 'the Court of the Hours, Guardians of the Day and the Night'.

After a rather monotonous journey throughout the day, we reached Honolulu at midnight. The limousine ride from the airfield to the hotel was a very pleasant change. The beautiful city presented a festival of lights on the eve of the '*lei*' day on the first of May. '*Lei*' literally means 'garlands' in the local dialect, and the first day of May every year, instead of being associated with labour rallies, is the occasion for Hawaiian dances with the luxurious aroma of fragrant flowers done into huge and artistic garlands.



Dr and Mrs Sinclair were kind enough to take us to all the beauty-spots in Honolulu on this 'lei' day. Dr Sinclair is the President of the University of Hawaii and is deeply interested in India and accordingly he put me searching questions on the social, economic and political problems facing India after the achievement of Swaraj. He spent the whole day with us at different 'points' of the Honolulu city. We saw the tall 'Aloha Tower' in the centre of the city, full of men and women all wearing colourful 'Aloha shirts' irrespective of age and sex. 'Aloha' is a very popular word in the Hawaiian Islands; it is a term of joy and good luck. Dr Sinclair also took us to the windy 'Pali' point—so windy in fact that my spectacles had to be removed for fear of being blown away into the deep valley! Mrs Agarwal found it impossible to go out of the car with her *sari* fluttering violently in the wind. Standing at the Pali point we could see at a distance the Pearl Harbour which was the historical scene of Japanese-American conflict during the last War. The Cocoanut Islands where experiments in fisheries are conducted by the American Government, presented a charming scene in the midst of the Pacific Ocean surrounding the Oahu Island. While returning from the Pali point, which is said to be one of the best spots in the world, we saw the 'upside-down waterfall' which flows up owing to excessive and strong winds. The Honolulu beach is very attractive and closely resembles the Juhu of Bombay. Unlike the other American cities, Honolulu's buildings are not high and huddled together. There are abundant rows of palm trees throughout the city, presenting a happy and quiet appearance. In the evening,

a demonstration of the Hawaiian dance in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel was a real treat to all of us.

The next day, Dr Sinclair took us to his University Campus. We were much impressed with the work carried on by the Teachers' Training College through its three laboratory centres, namely, the Pre-school Primary Unit or the Nursery section, the Elementary school and the Intermediate school. The buildings were of the simplest kind, made of wood and begas (sugar-cane) sheets with hardly any foundation at all. Emphasis on creative work by children was a very welcome feature of these educational institutions. The aspect of earning while learning was also remarkably stressed and organized. Prof. Moore of the Philosophy Department was kind enough to supply us detailed information regarding the general system of education in the United States some aspects of which will be dealt with later at the proper place. It was gratifying to know that the 'open-shelf' system in the University Library and spacious Reading Halls had proved to be quite successful in this University although other Universities in the United States had not been fortunate in this experiment to the same extent. The novel institution of 'Cafeteria' which is common throughout the United States of America was seen by us at the University of Hawaii for the first time. Queues of students holding their trays and picking up as they walk along articles of food they liked, paying the bill at the end of the queue, and placing back their trays and crockery after meals, is an arrangement which, besides eliminating the need for waiters and stewards, promotes self-help and saves considerable time. I wish this system

could be introduced in India at least in our educational institutions.

In the evening, Dr Sinclair took us to the closing session of the Senate or the Legislative Assembly of the Hawaiian Territory. The members had sat all night to complete the legislative business of the House and the Speaker was to deliver his farewell message. The members of the Senate were of Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and Negro descent; but they were all proud to be American without any narrow distinctions of race or colour. The level of the debate and discussion was also of a high order. We had the privilege of shaking hands with Governor Steinback who, after his final speech, walked out to his residence without any pomp or show. I was informed that the universal wish of the people of Hawaii was that they should be allowed by the American Congress to constitute a State of the U.S.A. rather than be merely its 'territory'. But the Congress, it was thought, was rather reluctant to concede the wishes of the Hawaiian people partly owing to the 'colour bar' that prevails in the United States even today.

Hawaii is famous for its sugar-cane cultivation and pineapple factories. Its climate and general landscape are extraordinarily pleasant and attractive. Throughout our world tour, I think Honolulu impressed us the most by its natural scenery. It could be rightly called 'a Paradise on Earth'.

## VI

### GLIMPSES OF THE UNITED STATES

ALTHOUGH Honolulu on the Hawaiian Islands is a 'territory' of the United States, it was in San Francisco that we first landed on American soil. San Francisco is a city with an exciting past, a prosperous present and a great future. It is a meeting place of the East and the West: there are many Chinese and Japanese nationals inhabiting the city. In fact China Town in 'Frisco is the largest Chinese city outside China. It is said that the first city that the Japanese had planned to occupy after the bombing of the Pearl Harbour was San Francisco because of its strategic and commercial importance. But the Japanese plans went awry and this city continued to enjoy normal life throughout the War. The main attractions in 'Frisco are the Golden Gate Bridge which is the longest single-span bridge in the world, and the Bay Bridge which is the longest, with a total length of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The cable cars on the high and low streets of San Francisco are a special feature of the town.

We were invited to address students at the Berkeley University of California and the Stanford University. The campuses of these American Universities are huge and picturesque; the number of students ranges from twenty to fifty thousand. The campus of the Stanford University, with its beautiful green 'Bowl' for Convocations and lectures, has an area of about seven thousand acres. Their libraries contain two to three million books, with spacious Reading Halls and Study Rooms.

So, like everything else in the United States, these educational centres too are on a very large scale. But the American educationists are not happy over this large size of Universities because it is impossible to foster intimate contacts between the professors and students. Several professors expressed the hope that America would, sooner than later, decentralize her educational system.

From 'Frisco we went to Los Angeles by the Morning Daylight train along the charming sea-coast with green orchards loaded with ripe peaches and pears. Several public lectures had been fixed for us at the Universities here. Mrs Watumull, Director of the Watumull Foundation, very kindly introduced us to several distinguished Americans at Los Angeles. The world-renowned Hollywood is a part of Los Angeles and there is nothing spectacular about it. There are, of course, several 'giant' Studios of well-known Film Companies, and we were fortunate in being able to visit the R.K.O. and Walt Disney Studios during our stay.

Our next halt was at the Grand Canyon which is the most spectacular illustration of soil erosion in the world. The combined action of a great river, of rain, wind and the prying fingers of frost, it is a gigantic chasm 217 miles long, 4 to 18 miles wide and a mile deep. At its bottom, a mighty river, the Colorado, rushes into the sea. Rising from its depths are whole ranges of mountains, their tops only slightly below the rim of the gorge. Over the rock-temples and into the depths of the chasm spreads a sea of ever-changing colours. By day it is the home of molten colour; by moonlight it is a blue mystery. Always and in whatever mood, the Grand Canyon grips

and humbles and uplifts. We had the opportunity of viewing it from the air; it was a memorable sight indeed. We also met one of the Kolb brothers who explored these regions in the beginning at grave risks to their lives. The Red Indians live in the Grand Canyon region, and Hopi House opposite the El Tovar Hotel is a good collection of Red Indian art which is similar to our own Indian handicrafts in many respects. The Red Indians also perform each evening ceremonial and picturesque dances in front of the Hopi House.

From the Grand Canyon we flew to Chicago and stayed in the Stevens Hotel which is supposed to be the biggest hotel in the world with 3000 rooms. Public engagements had been fixed for us at the University of Chicago and the International House. A visit to the Illinois Institute of Technology also proved very instructive. Besides a Radio interview, we were invited to televise a dialogue from one of the premier Studios; it was, of course, a thrilling experience. Chicago is the centre of the meat industry; but our visit to the stock-yards was very trying owing to the extremely unpleasant smell in that area. We were much impressed by the Planetarium and the Museum of Science and Industry because of their educative value. The Hull House in Chicago is an educational institution for poor children and was well worth a visit.

We again flew from Chicago to the Niagara Falls; the aerial view was exquisite. The river Niagara joins the two Lakes of Erie and Ontario, one in America and the other in Canada. The Falls too are partly in the United States and partly in the Dominion of Canada. No

words can adequately describe this magnificent display of Nature's eternal power. Here the massive ruggedness of the Horseshoe Falls combines with the streamlined grace of the American Falls to form a real Wonder of the World, one of the most awe-inspiring and majestic sights the earth can offer. The Falls present an unforgettable picture at any time of day or season; thrilling by sunlight when the rainbow appears, romantic by moonlight, and a fairyland when seen by artificial coloured lights after nine in the evening. For the purpose of illuminating both the Canadian and American Cataracts, the Niagara Board has installed in the Parks twenty-four 36-inch searchlights each of which emits  $5\frac{1}{2}$  crores candle-power, totalling in all, approximately 132 crores candle-power! As we had stayed in the General Brock Hotel on the Canadian side, the illuminated Falls could be clearly seen from our room at night. We went round the Niagara Parks in a limousine and visited the 'Flaming Water' or the 'Cold Fire' which is said to have been discovered by the Red Indians about 300 years ago. In order to get views of the Falls from all angles and positions, we also went down the 'Cave of the Winds' and descended in a lift to see through the rocks massive waters falling in front of us. A steamer carried us quite near the Falls with their sprays and their musical grandeur. The cable car carrying passengers over the Whirlpool Basin provides an exciting trip; it is said to be the longest cable railway in the world.

Since a labour strike was still continuing at the Ford's works at Detroit, we could not see them and after spending one day and one night at the Falls we left for New

York. The first impression of this nerve-centre of international commerce was quite disappointing; the smoky and dull atmosphere of this congested town of inartistic skyscrapers was uninviting. The India League of America, with its enthusiastic President, Shri. J. J. Singh, was the first to arrange a public function in our honour. And then followed engagements, both public and private, day after day from early morning till late at night, so that we spent in New York some of the busiest weeks of our tour in America. The enthusiasm that people in America evinced in Mahatma Gandhi's life and work and ideology was so keen and cordial and spontaneous that it was impossible to refuse any invitation for a talk or a lecture. The New York and Columbia Universities as well as the International House arranged for our talks during our stay in the city. Dr John Holmes, who is one of the most ardent admirers of Gandhiji in America, was kind enough to invite us to address a Sunday congregation at his Community Church. It was also a pleasure to meet Louis Fischer who was then busy writing a 600-page biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

∴ New York is in many ways the wonder city of the world. Its five boroughs with an area of 320 square miles have a population of about 8 millions; two centuries ago its total population was only 250,000. It has the Empire State Building, 1250 feet high, with 102 storeys, the tallest in the world. With the Wall Street as the centre of international trade and commerce, New York's deposits in the Banks exceed a thousand two hundred crore dollars. The number of buildings exceeds 6,50,000 of which more than 4,300 have more than ten



floors. New York has 200 parks and over 170 playgrounds; there are 1,550 Churches and 1,100 Theatres and Picture Houses, the Radio City Music Hall being the best and the richest. The total number of telephones in New York is 3 millions; this is more than the combined number in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Brussels. The chief places of interest in the city are the Chrysler Building, the New York Times Building, the Riverside Church, Grant's Tomb, the City Hall, Coney Island, the Public Library, the Statue of Liberty and the Rockefeller Centre.

We were invited by the Embassy of India to spend a few days in the American Metropolis, Washington. On the very first day of our arrival in the Capital, we had the privilege of attending a special function in the Howard University at which Mrs Pandit, India's Ambassador in the United States, was conferred an Honorary Degree. We were also asked to address the National Council of Negro Women; this we did with pleasure because we desired to get first-hand information regarding the condition of Negroes in the United States. Unlike New York, Washington is a clean, open, and uncongested city with a population of only 22,50,000. It is free from smoke; all the electric wiring is underground. It has a great variety of splendid museums, art galleries, libraries and public buildings. The Capitol, with the two Houses of the Congress, is one of the finest specimens of modern architectural beauty, although the seating arrangements in the Senate and the House of Representatives are of a very ordinary kind. The Library of the Congress is the biggest library in the world, with about 90 lakh

volumes on its shelves. The underground book-carriers operated by electricity are so efficient that during important discussions in the Congress any member can ask for a book for reference purposes and he is able to get it within a few minutes. The National Gallery of Art is the richest collection of paintings in the world. Although the Americans cannot claim to have first-class artists in their own land, they have spent millions of dollars in procuring for themselves the best pieces of art from different parts of the world. No visitor to the Metropolis can miss the sight of the Washington Monument which consists of a tapering column 555 feet high and weighing 81,120 tons; the top can be reached by an electric elevator in only seventy seconds. The Lincoln Memorial is a stately structure, simple but grand, with Lincoln's sombre statue in a sitting posture in the middle of the building. On one of the walls, the following words are carved out in marble:

“IT IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE GREAT TASK REMAINING BEFORE US—THAT FROM THESE HONORED DEAD WE TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION—THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN—THAT THIS NATION UNDER GOD SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM, AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH.”

These words were uttered by President Lincoln after the termination of the Civil War. But Negroes in

America are ill-treated to this day in the most barbaric fashion and the "government of the people by the people for the people" is gradually receding into Militarism, which is the arch enemy of democracy.

It was impossible to leave Washington without paying a visit to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, about thirty miles from the city. As late as 1853, there was no proper arrangement for the maintenance of this estate of George Washington. Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham of South Carolina started the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in that year and since then this Association has been looking after Mount Vernon with great care and efficiency. As George Washington was fairly rich, he had not accepted any salary during his terms of Presidentship; even after his death he had willed that 'his corpse may be interred in a private manner, without parade or funeral oration.' "Within this Enclosure rest the remains of Gen. George Washington," are, therefore, the only words inscribed on a tablet over the entrance to the simple vault where rest the last earthly remains of this great Founder-President of the United States. On our way to Mount Vernon, we also saw the Arlington Cemetery and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

We had planned to stay in Philadelphia for a few days to study the work of the American Friends Service Committee of which we had heard so much in India. In Philadelphia we visited the Independence Hall where the thirteen States of America proclaimed Liberty on July 4, 1774. It was very interesting to know that the huge Bell of Liberty which can still be seen in the centre of the Hall was

manufactured in England before America was declared free from the political domination of the British. On it were inscribed by the British workmen the following words from the Bible: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." These significant words did come true so far as America was concerned, because it was this very Bell which proclaimed liberty to all the people of the United States. Pendle Hill, an educational Community Centre near Philadelphia, is a remarkable Colony maintained and run by the Quakers. We stopped at Baltimore as well for a few hours to meet Dr Sushila Nayyar who was studying medicine at the John's Hopkin's Hospital.

The best way to see America's beautiful countryside is to travel by a Greyhound bus. We, therefore, left for Boston by bus and did get a good idea about the American villages in the course of this all-day journey. Boston is a city with a curious mixture of culture and commerce. It is an important harbour with prosperous manufacturing business; at the same time it is a seat of education with the famous Harvard University and the Massachussets Institute of Technology. It was a great pleasure to meet Prof. Schumpeter, Head of the Economics Department, Harvard University, who happens to be in complete agreement with the Gandhian idea of decentralization in industry. We were wonder-struck to visit the giant Digital Calculating Machinery in the University. It is capable of doing in one hour complicated calculations that 5000 clerks would take a whole day to do. If there is anything wrong either with the mathematical problem or the mechanical structure, the machine will stop; it

will never miscalculate. It can not only add or multiply but can also solve abstract problems of higher mathematics. The professors in Harvard were, however, not satisfied with the speed of this machine; they were busy setting up a bigger one down in the basement which will work 300 times faster than the present machine. The very idea of such a machine is, indeed, staggering: but much more wonderful than this machine is surely the human brain that is capable of inventing a 'mechanical mind' like this. Another place of special interest in the Harvard University is the Botanical Museum which contains innumerable varieties of fresh plants and flowers. Imagine our surprise when we were told quietly at the end of our visit that all these flowers were made of glass! This marvellous collection of glass plants and flowers was the work of two German artists who lived in the eighties of the nineteenth century.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, briefly known as the M.I.T., is perhaps the best technological institution in the world. It has not only trained some of the best engineers but has also been successful in solving many difficult problems facing the American industries from time to time. Maintained by a few prominent industrialists of the United States, it is a living centre of industrial research which combines the study of theory with intensive practice. It possesses a library which is claimed to be the best collection of books on technological sciences. In Boston, we visited the site of the historical Tea Party which started the fight for American Independence. The Vedanta Centre, about 20 miles away from the city, is a delightful place where a number

of Americans go to study Indian culture and Philosophy.

Before leaving Boston, a few Indian students volunteered to take us to the house of Emerson, which is a bit away from the town. I was eager to see this house because of the influence Emerson's writing had exercised on Gandhiji's mind. It was interesting to see many articles of furniture prepared by Thoreau in the house of Emerson. Later, we visited the ruins of Thoreau's hut on the side of a lake. It is significant to know that it was Thoreau's essay on Passive Resistance that inspired Mahatma Gandhi to develop his technique of *Satyagraha*.

## VII

### ILLUSIONS AND DISILLUSIONS

SINCE AMERICA is the richest country in the world to-day, people outside the United States have formed peculiar notions about the standard of living of the Americans. We in India imagine that they have developed an 'electric button' civilization in which electricity does all the work and people have only to press buttons. I certainly was under this illusion before visiting the United States, but now I can say without hesitation that I found the Americans a most hard-working people. It is true that America has immensely developed electric power and utilizes it for providing many amenities of daily life. But the Americans are never ashamed of working with their hands; they rather take delight in manual labour. Even the greatest engineer in America will not hesitate to do a mechanic's ordinary work if occasion arises. He will hang up his coat, pull up his sleeves, and set to work immediately without waiting for his subordinates. In most of the houses in the United States, specially in the countryside, there is a 'workshop' in the basement where all the necessary implements for general household repairs would be available. Both husband and wife find nothing shameful about doing their own work in the basement-shop, dressed in the rough blue clothes used by labourers. There are hardly any domestic servants in America. Therefore, even the upper middle class families have to do their cooking, washing and cleaning all by themselves. In fact, the Americans do not know how to rest; they

are used to work incessantly from morning till evening. At night they try to relax themselves in Television or Cocktail houses. It is only in America that the bus driver does the work of a conductor and a guide in addition to his own duties. People are full of energy and vigour to do all kinds of interesting or necessary jobs.

In the Universities, at least half the students earn while they learn. Since the tuition fees are very high in America owing to heavy administrative expenditure, many parents are unable to finance their children's education. Therefore, students are obliged to work hard for paying their own expenses. They do not grudge even menial work and the sons of rich parents often like to take up a job simply because they do not desire to appear different from other friends of theirs. Students earn by doing menial work like serving and washing in restaurants and hotels, lawn-mowing, looking after children in different households, and part-time clerical jobs. During summer, they work hard in the orchards and on the farms like ordinary labourers. Even in the Professors' Clubs and Students' Cafeterias (that highly useful institution in America described before) of their own Colleges and Universities, students do the serving and washing without any sense of inferiority. Many students, both boys and girls, are even able to save out of their earnings after paying the tuition fees; this money is often utilized in purchasing a car among three or four friends. Petrol is comparatively very cheap and plentiful in America, and travelling in a car is, therefore, the cheapest way of seeing America from end to end. Thus nearly half of the American students also own cars. If you visit any



university in America you will see hundreds of rows of these cars parked outside the Campus. In the beginning when I found thousands of cars outside the University gate, I thought there was some special function like a Convocation (or Commencement as the Americans call it) that day. Later, I learnt that they were the automobiles of students who have to park them like this daily as a matter of routine. The American students are very studious and dress in a simple style, although they smoke a bit too much even in the class rooms. Anybody who goes to America with different notions about the life of students will surely be disillusioned before long.

It is usually thought that the Americans who worship Gold as God would be generally dishonest in money matters. But this is an entirely mistaken notion. To give a striking instance, I found heaps of newspapers placed on the pavements in some of the important streets of New York. There was a small metal bowl placed near the heap. There was no hawker or policeman. People took a copy of the newspaper from the heap and placed the required coins in the bowl without any thought of dishonesty. This is a very ordinary example, but it is highly significant all the same. Imagine what would happen to such a heap of newspapers in a country like India or even in certain countries of Europe!

Once we happened to leave our purse in a taxi cab. The purse contained not only money but very important documents. We were, therefore, naturally much worried about the loss and made enquiries with the police authorities. But we did not remember the number, or even

the name of the company owning the taxi. After about two hours we found the purse at the 'desk' of the hotel. The clerk told us that a taxi driver had come and deposited the purse with him for being delivered to us. We were, indeed, much relieved and wondered at the honesty of the driver. Since he had left his address and telephone number at the 'desk' we contacted him on the 'phone and requested him to meet us at a time convenient to him. He did come the same evening and narrated how he spent full one hour in going from hotel to hotel to find out the probable owner of the purse. Ultimately, by a process of elimination, he thought that the purse must belong to us and so he left it with the clerk. We thanked him most cordially for his kindness and help, and presented to him a small piece of Indian art as a token of our gratefulness. This is only one more instance of American honesty. Such cases may be multiplied endlessly. Of course, there are black sheep everywhere and America can be no exception. But the standard of honesty in America is very high indeed. It is not a question of mere economic prosperity; it is more a matter of training and education.

I had imagined that the American cities would be spotlessly clean. But I was sadly disillusioned. Chicago and even New York are quite unclean, dark and congested. The streets are not very broad either. American newspapers are extraordinarily bulky, most of them containing ninety-two pages; besides, they issue several editions during the day. People, therefore, naturally throw them in the litter-boxes because it is impossible to carry newspapers for a long time or distance owing

to their excessive bulk. These papers thus litter the American streets as a matter of course. Since there is shortage of man-power in the United States, there are no sweepers to clean the streets; they have to be washed occasionally with hose-pipes. Most of the litter is washed away, but some does remain attached to the corners and sides and there rots and smells for some days. Moreover, big American cities are smoky owing to factory chimneys, and the skyscrapers are, consequently, dark and dull in appearance. The cabs, buses and trams are not very elegant either. The Americans believe in sending new automobiles for export and using old ones at home. The number of cars in America is phenomenal. But parking of these 'autos' has grown into a stupendous problem. Sometimes it is easy to walk a distance rather than ride in a cab; this is due to very heavy traffic which results in congestion at every crossing. People are not allowed to park in every street; there are special parking places sometimes several storeys high. One has often to park his car several miles from his office or residence and, then, go by public bus or underground train to his or her place of work. This anomaly is the logical conclusion of excessive mechanization and centralization in Uncle Sam's land.

It is easier to move in a city like New York than in a small Indian town. And the reasons are quite simple. Firstly, all the streets in American cities are simply numbered and not named; they begin from the First Street or Avenue and go up to the Hundredth or Hundred and Fiftieth Street in simple arithmetical sequence. If therefore, you know the number of the street and the number

of the flat, moving about from place to place is an easy affair. Secondly, the policemen and the public in general are extremely helpful in guiding and assisting foreign tourists; they go even out of their way to help you. Buses, trams, underground and elevated trains are plentiful in America. Good milk, fruits and all other kinds of food are available in any quantity at every corner. Usually the prices in American shops are fixed; but recently, owing to economic depression, you could succeed in securing reduced prices after a little bargaining. This appears to be 'un-American' but, nonetheless, quite true. So America is a land where a number of illusions are disillusioned!

## VIII

### DEMOCRACY IN UNCLE SAM'S OWN HOME

IN 'OCCUPIED' Japan, General MacArthur was professing to teach 'democracy' to the 'feudal and fascist' nationals. In Germany too, the Americans are planning to build up Hitler's land on the sound foundations of democratic living. But those who have been to the United States recently know very well the kind of democracy that is being practised in Uncle Sam's own home. Anything that appears to be progressive and not in line with the prevailing capitalistic order is at once dubbed as 'Red' and 'Un-American', and the person or persons concerned are hounded by the police. The American Press and the Radio, both entirely dominated by the financiers and industrialists, pour out from day to day and even from hour to hour the worst type of poison against the Soviet regime and give to the American public an impression that Russia is their enemy number one. Men of the Military are always eager to tighten their hold on the masses by circulating from time to time frightening stories about preparations in the U.S.S.R. for the next war. Military programmes and training have been extended to schools and colleges, and even the girls' high schools have not been left out. Professors in State Colleges and Universities are being asked to sign pledges that they would dissociate from all 'subversive' and 'un-American' activities. Slightest suspicion in this regard inevitably means dismissal and even imprisonment. With the exception of Dr Robert Hutchins, Chancellor of the University of

Chicago, all other heads of Universities have succumbed to this constant pressure from the militant Administration. Dr Hutchins in the course of his memorable Note to the Federal Government made it abundantly clear that Communism in America could be checked not by the police and the military but by setting their own house in order. If the kind of soil that is most fertile for Communists is not allowed to develop in the country, all will be well with America. Otherwise, no amount of coercion, violent or insidious, will ever be able to stem the tide of Communism in the United States. This warning of Chancellor Hutchins will, I hope, not go unheeded by Uncle Sam; in fact, other countries including India should ponder seriously over this sound advice. In a country like the United States of America where students and professors dare not discuss problems like Capitalism and Communism freely even in the class rooms, there must, certainly, be something essentially wrong with the socio-economic organization of the State.

In the social sphere, America's treatment of Negroes is, to say the least, undemocratic. Although there is absolutely no scope for racial discrimination in the Constitution of the United States, the coloured people in Uncle Sam's land are 'lynched' to this day without either fear or shame. During our seven-week stay in America, we came across several cases of this most brutal form of murder in the *New York Times*. The State laws appear to be helpless in the face of this savagely racial kind of atrocity by the mob, specially in the Southern States. President Truman's efforts to get rid of this glaring example of racial discrimination have roused the ire of a number

of Congressmen of the Southern States although they belong to the Democratic Party. Thus the President has been experiencing considerable difficulty in seeing his programme through the Congress because several of his own party-men have turned against him for his sympathies with Negroes. The 'Jim Crow' laws in America do not allow the coloured people to occupy front seats in trams, buses, or trains. Negroes cannot enter the public hotels, restaurants or shops; they cannot use the public halls for their meetings. Although officially the Universities and colleges are open to all citizens of the United States, Negro students are compelled to join only those educational institutions that are reserved for them. Coloured professors, however learned, can teach only in the Negro Universities, the 'white' students have no use for their talents and knowledge. Dr Mordecai Johnson, the distinguished President of the Howard University which is a Negro institution, was in India recently in connexion with the World Pacifist Conference. Even a highly cultured man like him cannot get into the State Universities of America simply because he is born of Negro parents. Paul Robeson, one of the most celebrated composers of the world, was hooted out during a musical performance in America a few months ago. These disgraceful incidents in Uncle Sam's own home sadly belie the professions of democracy that America is never tired of making to the outside world. In all the big cities of the United States like Chicago and New York, there are Negro Colonies reserved for the coloured people. Negroes are not permitted to reside in other parts of the cities. These Colonies are choking with filth and dirt partly because of the

habits of the Negroes and partly because the Municipal authorities do not pay much attention to the sanitation of these sectors. I had a chance of visiting some of these Colonies in America; they reminded me of the 'Harijan Colonies' in India against which Gandhiji fought so hard throughout his life. Untouchability in India is, surely, a great curse; it is a dark blot on our culture and civilization. Although it has been made illegal under the new Constitution, the work of the social reformers in India has not ended and cannot end unless the sense of untouchability is rooted out from the very hearts of the people. In America also, colour discrimination is illegal; nevertheless, it continues to remain a shameful blot on the democratic way of life of the Americans.

In the economic field, the United States has yet to learn that there can be no real political democracy without reasonable economic equality. It is true that in America every third man has a car. But there is staggering disparity between the incomes of the labour class and the rich. While an unskilled wage-earner gets about 250 dollars a month, the income of a business magnate runs into billions of dollars. Consequently, 'slums' there are even in New York. Moreover, despite Uncle Sam's wealth, there are about half a crore of unemployed people in his 'house'. Of course, they do not starve, since the State is legally responsible for their maintenance. But the pathetic and immoral life that these 'dole-eaters' are compelled to lead is inconsistent with the basic principles of democracy.

Thus, the spread of democracy in Uncle Sam's own home is far from satisfactory. Gaps are revealed some-



times as when the world-renowned Professor Harold Laski, after being invited by an American University, had to go back without delivering his lectures simply because the Government did not relish his Socialist views. It was hard to believe when I first heard of it, but on making enquiries I found it to be absolutely true. I know President Truman is aware of the imperfections of American democracy. In the course of his message to one of the annual functions of the Liberal Party in New York, Truman made the following significant observation:

“The world today is an arena in which the principles of democracy are being challenged, and the people of the world are measuring the performance of democracies against the promises of totalitarianism. To meet this challenge requires the free peoples of the earth to perfect the working of their own democracies.”

Speaking on the occasion, Louis Fischer, the well-known American author, remarked with special emphasis:

“Sometimes the things that are happening in the U.S.A. frighten me as much as anything in the world. I travel a good deal in this country; our people are not as attached to tolerance and free speech as they used to be. We have curtailed the freedom to dissent. The loyalty tests, which are being applied not only in Washington but to street cleaners in some cities, mean that we suspect guilt before any guilt could exist. There is the beginning of a terror in this country, and though it is only a beginning, it

is grave and sad. The most sacred heritage of America is freedom and it is a better weapon against Communism than bombs."

This warning by one of the distinguished sons of America deserves the careful attention of all lovers of freedom and democracy!

## IX

### AMERICA ADMIRES GANDHI

DURING MY tour of the United States of America I did not come across a single man even in the remotest countryside who did not know about Mahatma Gandhi. A porter or a 'red cap', or a taxi-cab driver, or a labourer working in the interior would ask me whether I belonged to India, and then would spontaneously exclaim: "Gandhi was a great man: I admire his courage." "Gandhi did so much good to India, but he was killed. Who killed him? Was he mad?"—would be other types of remarks. Someone else would observe: "Gandhi was a good old man, I love him for his frankness!" On the assassination of Gandhiji, the American press and radio evinced deep emotion and day after day the American papers and the Radio Broadcasting stations were full of details regarding his remarkable life and work during the last few decades. Out of love and admiration for Gandhiji, the man in the street in America as in India, very often calls him 'Mahatma' and not 'Mr'. He really feels that the Mahatma stood for something which the world needs today. The way he struggled ceaselessly against the British Empire without arms elicits heart-felt admiration from the average American.

Besides these common 'folk' in the United States, there are a good number of intellectuals like Dr John Holmes, Mrs Pearl Buck, Louis Fischer and Prof. Einstein who have the greatest regard for Mahatma Gandhi. I had the opportunity of meeting most of these personalities; they

were very eager to know more about Gandhiji's ideals and activities. There are a number of organizations like the American Friends Service Committee, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters' International which hold him in very high esteem and consider his life an inspiration in their work for peace and brotherhood. They all feel intensely that Gandhi's India has to give a bold lead to the war-weary world in non-violence and demilitarisation, and sometimes they are sorely disappointed to know that, like other countries, India is also spending about half of her revenue on defence. Still, they pin their hopes on Gandhiji's spirit guiding India along the right path so that the world may learn a new lesson of non-violence and love and thereby become a better place to live in.

I had the occasion to meet quite a good number of University professors and others who are genuine well-wishers of India. They invariably expressed the view that an ancient nation like India should not try to 'ape' the West. Instead, she must revive her own glorious culture and give to the Western countries a 'new way of life' which they so urgently need. The great educationist of America, Prof. John Dewey, now nearing ninety, stressed the same hope. Prof. Schumpeter, Head of the Economics Department in Harvard University, remarked: "America has made a mess of herself and humanity. If India copies her, she will kill herself."

Curiously enough, despite the excessive centralization in national life, there is visible in the United States a definite trend towards decentralization which Gandhiji so much emphasized in all his writings. In the sphere of

industrialization, several big factories like Ford's are distributing their plants in the neighbouring countryside in order to avoid congestion and labour troubles. With plans for greater 'rural electrification', smaller industries in villages are getting better chances to develop and prosper. Several enlightened men and groups are attempting to establish Community Centres in the countryside, of which the United States could be legitimately proud. The Quakers have founded an admirable educational community known as Pendle Hill near Philadelphia. We had a chance to stay there for three nights and it was a pleasant surprise to find that the daily life of self-supporting manual labour and co-operative effort was much the same as in Gandhiji's Ashrams in our own country. Dr Arthur Morgan's experiments in community life at Yellow Springs, Ohio, are also remarkable. He is endeavouring to establish model village communities with decentralized cottage industries run efficiently with the help of electricity and small modern machines. I had the privilege of meeting Prof. Borsodi who has been working very hard during the last few decades to bring about decentralization in the economic field. He gave me scientific reasons in great detail why the consumers' goods industries should be decentralized and not centralized as they are today. He has recently published a book entitled *Education and Living* which deserves to be widely read in India. There are other people in America who agree with Borsodi's principles and call themselves 'Decentralists'. Although their number is at present quite small, they have a definite place in the progressive section of educationists in America.

In the domain of consumers' distribution as well, there are unmistakable signs of decentralization. In a very recent issue of the *New York Times* an editorial comment pointed out how New York City Departmental Stores were steadily spreading themselves into the suburbs and the countryside, because the consumers find this arrangement eminently convenient. Businessmen in big cities are naturally worried about this tendency. But the logical conclusion of excessive centralization is, perhaps, decentralization. I feel that America has now reached the saturation point in centralized organization, and science itself would gradually compel her to disperse and decentralize her economic life, and her political life too. Although the population of America is only about 15 crores as compared with our population of 35 crores, there are at present half a crore unemployed people in the United States. 'Recession', which is only a polite and less alarming name for 'depression' has already set in, and America will, whether she likes it or not, inevitably have to slow down her mechanization and decentralize her industries.

Increasing industrial strikes are a source of constant headache to capitalists and statesmen throughout the world. America is no exception; in fact she has to face this problem in greater complexity than the countries of Europe and Asia. It is from this standpoint that American industrialists are seriously planning to decentralize and distribute their large-scale establishments into numerous small-scale units stretching through the countryside. The Ford Motor Company have already plunged into this bold experiment and, I think, with considerable success.

So far as I know, these decentralized units are not organized on a co-operative basis; they are part and parcel of the centrally organized capitalist plan. Still, the industrialists find it much easier to deal with the distributed smaller establishments, with their smaller number of workmen. I had the opportunity of discussing this problem with several professors of Economics in America. The Director of the National Council of Economic Research in New York also analysed the cause of strikes. All of them agreed that the only lasting solution of the phenomenon of strikes was large-scale decentralization of big industries into co-operative enterprises where the workers themselves become the owners of industries. There appears to be hardly any short-cut to this stupendous problem facing modern industrialization. It has to be increasingly realized that the best way to stem the tide of Communism is not by building up a huge military or atomic force but by removing the root cause of industrial conflict through the organization of Industrial Co-operatives.

The vulnerability of giant cities and factories in case of atomic warfare is very easy to understand. In fact, the centralization of armament factories and other essential industries in Germany and Japan proved to be their weakest point during the last war. On the other hand, the decentralized Indusco movement in China served as the surest line of defence against the aggressive designs of Nippon. In the United States there was an undercurrent of nervousness in the political life owing to the fear of atom bombs. Now that news has appeared about the explosion of an atom bomb in the U.S.S.R., I am

sure many American capitalists must have been deeply perturbed over the event. One of the main points universally stressed by industrial planners is, therefore, that America must disperse her huge industrial establishments without further delay. It is painful to visualize the fate of a giant city like New York in the event of bombardment by the enemy. The numerous skyscrapers including the Empire State Building with its 102 storeys would soon crumble into heaps of debris burying beneath them thousands of helpless men, women and children. The latest fashion among the rich class in America is, consequently, to build nice little cottages in the countryside where they could seek shelter in case of war.

It is extremely interesting to know that America's great President Jefferson was also a strong believer in decentralization. His aim, in the words of Prof. John Dewey, was to 'make the wards little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which being under their eye, they could better manage than the larger republics of the country or State'. But President Jefferson's plan was not accepted by the people of America, just as we do not seem to accept Mahatma Gandhi's plan of decentralization. So much the worse for America and India!

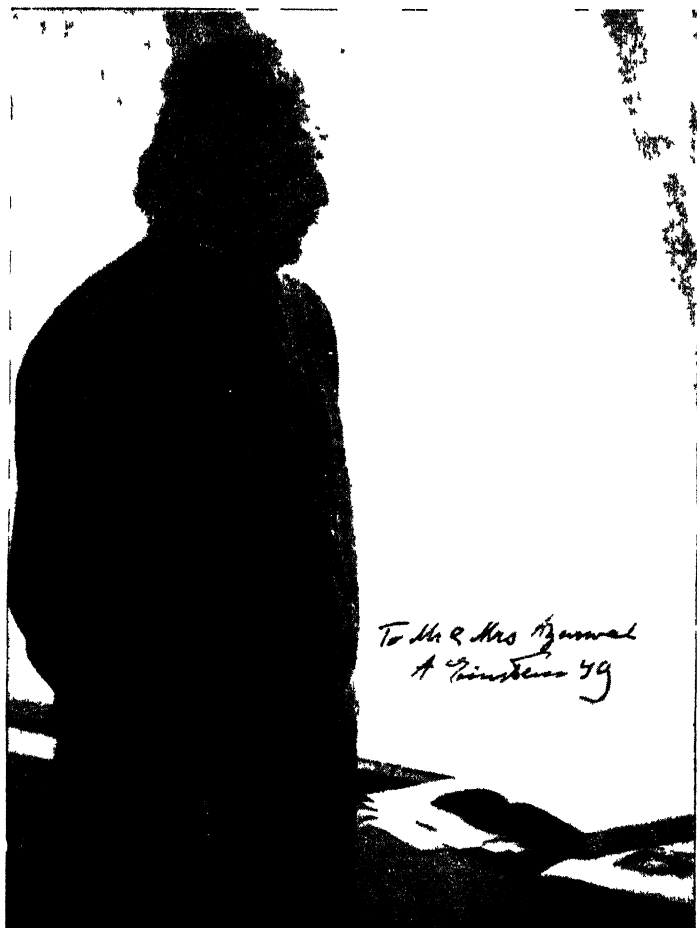
The United States today suffers from a strange 'Communism-hysteria'. The Press and the Radio are full of alarm and hatred towards Communism and Russia. Intelligent people who are fully aware of the evils and the inherent weakness of Capitalism are worried about the future of American economic life and are earnestly trying to find an 'alternative' or a via media between Capitalism



and Communism. They naturally look towards the East, especially India, for a new light and a new mode of life. They believe that the Gandhian philosophy of decentralization is full of immense potentialities not only for India but for the whole world. But if India herself tries to copy the economic and industrial pattern of the West, the high hopes that people set on her will be dashed to pieces.

America is undoubtedly a great country; she is young and full of vitality. Her scientific advancement is phenomenal. Despite all the mechanization, the people are very hard-working. But America lacks 'balance' and 'mature wisdom' which older and experienced nations are expected to possess. India has much to learn from the United States in science and technology. But America, in turn, is in dire need of a philosophy of life which India can impart to her. America admires Gandhi. Let India be worthy of Gandhi.





PROF. ALBERT EINSTEIN

## X

### INTERVIEW WITH PROF. EINSTEIN

I REGARD myself extremely fortunate in being able to meet Prof. Einstein during my world tour. To arrange a meeting with the great Professor is not an easy matter. Firstly, he is too busy with his own scientific researches, and secondly, he has been in indifferent health for the last few years. It was, therefore, a piece of very good news to know in New York that Prof. Einstein had kindly invited us to tea at his residence in the Campus of the Princeton University. Shri Manilal Gandhi, the eldest living son of Mahatma Gandhi, was also to be with us. As we went to Princeton in the suburban electric train, I remembered those memorable words of Prof. Einstein which constitute, perhaps, the best tribute so far paid to Gandhiji: "Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such a one as this, ever in flesh and blood, walked upon this earth!"

The Campus of the Princeton University is extraordinarily charming. The Secretary of the Chancellor of the University was kind enough to take us round the Campus. When we reached the cottage of Prof. Einstein, we were struck by the simplicity of the small wooden house which did not have even a name-plate in front of it. On hearing of our arrival, the Professor came down from the upper study-room and greeted us with a cordial smile. His dress was utterly simple and informal, his hair uncombed and silvery.

As the Professor sat down with us and tea was served by his secretary, our talk naturally began with Professor Einstein's enquiry: "I was shocked to read about Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The whole world was sad. But who was this young crazy boy who killed him?" I explained to him how the partition of India embittered a section of the Hindus. When Gandhiji tried to protect the Muslims in India at a time when Hindus in Pakistan were being brutally murdered and looted, this militant Hindu group lost its balance. A few young men of this group conspired to kill the Mahatma and succeeded in their devilish plan!

The Professor heaved a sigh of sorrow and remarked: "Gandhi was a miracle of man. He never cared whether his ideas were popular or not; he never sought any protection from the police. The wonder is that he was not assaulted earlier. Such shameful tragedies happen with the greatest of men. But Gandhi's death was his greatest victory!"

After a short pause, Professor Einstein asked me: "Mahatma Gandhi's idea of economic decentralization in the form of cottage industries was meant mainly for Indian conditions or did he visualize a decentralized pattern for the whole world?"

"So far as I know, Gandhiji wanted the whole world to follow a decentralized economic and political structure because he thought that decentralization was indispensable for a non-violent society." Shri Manilal Gandhi nodded assent. The Professor began to think aloud:

"I believe that decentralization would be the future pattern of society. But I do not know how it is going to

be so. There is always danger of tyranny by a centralized Government. Large centralized cities are simply horrible. I believe that local decentralization is feasible. Every person must work for his livelihood. I am a convinced Socialist."

In order to avoid too much strain on the Professor, we tried to change the topic of conversation. My wife showed a beautiful album of Gandhiji which had been received by us from Kanu Gandhi only a few days before. She also presented to Prof. Einstein a small ivory statue of Gandhiji. The Professor was moved by the present and said that he would treasure it.

"What is the duty of women in modern life? If you do not mind I would like to know your opinion," said my wife hesitatingly.

"In India, the duty of women is very clear," smiled Prof. Einstein. "They should not have too many children!"

"But is it not the duty of men also?" enquired Mrs Agarwal. "Certainly," added the Professor. "Women should be given more economic protection; they should not be kept down as in Europe and America."

"How to raise the moral standard of men and society?" asked Mrs Agarwal.

"There can be no general solution or system," replied the Professor. "Each man or woman has to begin to improve himself or herself. At present, we glorify success instead of sacrifice. Therefore, people are ambitious. This ambition is the worst enemy of mankind. We must learn to serve and not to collect 'dollars'. Schools can do very much to bring about a change in our outlook and make for a better and happier world."

Shri Manilal Gandhi had come to America as an unofficial visitor to watch the proceedings of the United Nations in connexion with the South African issue. He was, therefore, eager to know the views of Prof. Einstein about the U.N.O.

"Do you think that the United Nations Organization will be able to serve any useful purpose?"

"Its faults are those of its birth," remarked the Professor. "It was given birth by governments which suffer from definite limitations. But there is no reason why, despite evident limitations, the U. N. O. should not be able to do well."

The Professor paused for a while and then continued: "The United Nations can succeed if there are sufficient men in it who sincerely desire to promote peace. But the pity of it all is that even such good-intentioned men are constantly 'weighed down' by their respective Governments."

"What do you think about the next war?" asked Shri Manilal.

"Who can tell?" observed Prof. Einstein in a sad tone. "I know that the majority of people in all countries never want it. War is precipitated by the Army leaders who, I honestly believe, are 'mad' men. But it is curious how these 'mad' men get on so well in politics!"

All of us laughed at this pithy and humorous remark. Prof. Einstein joined us in the laughter. We had been with him for about an hour. So we did not want to switch on to any further serious topic of conversation. My wife requested Prof. Einstein for his autograph and message. In her album, the Professor wrote this very significant sentence:

“Nothing is more important to man than man.”

We expressed our deep gratitude to Prof. Einstein for his kindness in sparing so much of his very valuable time. He was good enough to walk out into the small garden-lawn of his cottage for a group photograph. As we bowed before him in reverence and left his house-door to catch the evening train, I realized more than ever before that simplicity and humility were the signs of true greatness. One of Prof. Einstein's sentences was also resounding in my mind: “Gandhi's death was his greatest victory!” How true, but how tragic!



## XI

### PEARL BUCK GIVES A WARNING

WE HAD the opportunity of meeting Mrs Pearl Buck, the renowned novelist and well-known friend of India, in the office of the East and West Association in New York. Pearl Buck spends most of her time in the countryside doing social and cultural work in the American villages; she attends her office in New York only once a week.

When she knew that we had been to China en route to the United States, Pearl Buck turned her thoughts to China and gave her own analysis of the existing situation. "The failure of the Nationalist Government," she observed, "was mainly 'due to its corruption and inefficiency. The high officials of the Government, including Chiang Kai-shek, lead a luxurious life, cut off from the Chinese masses. They did not follow the laws of the State themselves and, thus, set a very bad example of indiscipline even in the ordinary rules of public traffic."

"Chiang Kai-shek's gravest mistake was over-centralization," added Pearl Buck. "The Chinese as a nation hate centralization of economic and political power; they are full of local patriotism and individual interests. The Nationalist Government, in their inordinate anxiety to curb the forces of Communism, trampled on the local interests of the Chinese people and earned their wrath and indignation."

"Do you think Communism will succeed in China under these circumstances?" was my natural question.

"I am afraid, Communism could be successful on the Chinese soil only if the new Government brought about decentralization of political and economic power. Otherwise there is every possibility of prolonged conflict between the individual and group interests. Communism of the Soviet type is hostile to the national traditions of the Chinese, and unless the new administration adapts itself tactfully to the genius of the people, it may invite unnecessary trouble and difficulties."

"Why did America not help the Nationalist Government in China?" was my next question.

"The United States could not have effectively helped Chiang Kai-shek without precipitating a third world war," replied Pearl Buck. "The U.S.S.R. has been, actively working on the side of the Communist forces and it was impossible for America to stem the tide of Communism in an indirect fashion. Open assistance would have surely meant armed conflict between the two major power blocs."

And, then, after a few moments of serious silence, she added:

"I must also frankly admit that the American people knew that Chiang Kai-shek had lost vital touch with his own people, and it was impossible to give him any substantial help without the co-operation of the Chinese masses. When Madame Chiang Kai-shek came to America for soliciting our financial assistance, I told her plainly that she must try to live in America in the simplest style if she really wanted to succeed. But in spite of all warnings, she lived in the most luxurious hotels in a lavish style. The American people, therefore, do not like her and are very reluctant to support a lost cause."

Pearl Buck's thoughts, then, turned to India whom she loves and admires. Because she is a true friend of Gandhi's country, she could not help sounding a note of warning to the new Government of India:

"May I say a word about your own country?" remarked the distinguished lady. "I sincerely feel that your Congress Government should learn a timely lesson from the tragic failure of Chiang Kai-shek in China. Your leaders must live a very simple and honest life and should maintain living contact with the masses. People should feel all the time that something good is being done to them by their leaders and the Government."

She paused for a while and then continued:

"And good to the people must be done quickly; delay would be highly dangerous. Indian leaders cannot afford to forget that time is of the essence."

"Don't you think that a policy of decentralization in India should be followed by our Government?" I enquired.

"I have not the slightest doubt about that," observed Pearl Buck emphatically. "India cannot afford to be blind to the lessons of China. If she also commits the grave mistake of over-centralizing economic and political power, she will have to repent at leisure. India has been a land of decentralized economy and democracy since times immemorial, and in the interests of national welfare these healthy traditions should not be disturbed."

Our conversation had so far been focussed on the East. I, therefore, wanted to change the topic and ask a few questions about the situation in America. But before doing so, I wanted to know whether Pearl Buck had any plans of visiting India in the near future.

"Won't you like to come to India and, as a sincere friend, give a timely warning before it may be too late?" I quietly asked.

She smiled and answered: "At present, your Government is engrossed with the stupendous problems arising out of partition. I hope to visit India after a year or two when she settles down to do real nation-building work."

"What is your message to our country at present?" enquired my wife.

"It is not for me to give messages and tender advice to your great and competent leaders. But I would, if I may, certainly give a friendly warning, and it is this: Let simplicity of life be the watchword of the new Government both at home and abroad."

We thanked Pearl Buck cordially for her sound advice and timely warning. Our talks, then, turned on the problems of America in relation to the impending world war.

"What do you think about the possibility of a global conflict in the near future?" I asked.

"It is very difficult to answer such questions, indeed. But all that we can do to avert the next war is to educate the masses in our own countries. For example, the country-folk in America know very little about Soviet Russia or Communism; they are, perhaps, the most ignorant people on earth. They get all their half-knowledge from the American papers which are full of sensational propaganda against the Soviet Union. I am, therefore, doing my bit in educating our village-folk in the right sense of the word."

"Don't you think that Fascism is fast growing in the United States in the name of suppressing the so-called 'Un-American' activities?" I hesitatingly enquired.

"Of course, yes," replied Pearl Buck in an emphatic tone. "You should know that America is being armed rapidly for 'ensuring peace'. Eighty-one per cent of our National Budget is spent on war preparations, and only 19 per cent on social welfare activities like health and education. For every dollar spent for Peace at the U.N.O., 1000 dollars are being used for armaments. There is a constant clamour for compulsory military training in the educational institutions. The military leaders are tactfully fostering all this vicious propaganda by spreading fear among the people. And the pity of it all is that even the most powerful women's organizations in America have fallen into the trap of military authorities by recently voting for conscription. When this measure is passed into Law, the control of military leaders will be complete."

"What about Russia?" I asked.

"I do not think the Russian people want war, although their military leaders are preparing them for another global conflict. The Americans fear that Russia would precipitate war; the Russians fear that America may force war on them. So this fear-complex is going from bad to worse day by day. Our work, therefore, should lie with the masses who must be helped to get rid of this fear-hysteria."

It was, indeed, a matter of deep satisfaction to have met this great lady about whom we had heard so much all these years.

## XII

### AN HOUR WITH PROF. JOHN DEWEY

A FEW Indian students at the International House informed me that Prof. John Dewey, the well-known American educationist and philosopher was in New York and it might be possible for me to meet him. Prof. Kilpatrick whom I had seen a few days earlier agreed to contact Prof. Dewey and fix an interview for me.

And so we did get the opportunity of meeting Prof. Dewey a day before leaving for London, on the 22nd June in the afternoon. Although the learned Professor was not keeping good health, he was kind enough to spare full one hour for us. Even at the age of ninety, Prof. Dewey showed a freshness of outlook and keenness of intellect which have always characterized his writings.

I had with me a few books regarding the system of Basic Education in India as outlined by Mahatma Gandhi. I presented these books to Prof. Dewey and asked him whether he knew about Gandhiji's educational scheme based on learning through a productive craft.

"Yes, I have heard about Gandhi's scheme of Basic Education," answered Prof. Dewey, "although, I confess I do not have a very clear idea about it."

Within a few minutes, I tried to explain to him how Gandhiji's plan of education was different from combining work with education. On the other hand, it was education *through* the medium of productive activity. In this system, academic subjects like History, Geography, Civics and Mathematics are taught to the students while

they are working at different crafts like spinning, weaving, gardening and agriculture, by exploiting the different processes of handwork for educative purposes. It is this integration of work with education, or the correlation of hand-culture and mind-culture, which distinguishes Gandhiji's plan of education from other 'methods'. Prof. Dewey observed:

"Gandhi's system of education is, I am sure, one step ahead of all the other systems. It is full of immense potentialities, and we all hope to learn much from India in this revolutionary educational effort."

Prof. Dewey then referred to the Chinese system of education as it existed several years ago when he had been to that vast and ancient country. "I was sorry to find in China that the professors and students imitated American manners and modes of thought, instead of trying to evolve their own indigenous culture and traditions," he remarked.

"The same thing is happening in Japan now," I said.

"Yes, I am glad you mentioned about Japan," observed the Professor. "I will be thankful if you give me some idea of the changes that are being introduced in the Japanese educational system after occupation by the SCAP authorities."

"The American system of education is being foisted on Japan in the name of Democracy. Co-education and greater importance to the English language are some of the new trends," I informed Prof. Dewey. "But the worst feature of the 'Occupational forces' is that plans are being prepared for wholesale conversion of the

Japanese to Christianity. The Americans seem to think that only Christians can be real democrats."

"This is very sad, indeed," remarked Prof. Dewey.

"I did try to raise my voice against this cultural domination and conversion while I was in Tokyo," I added.

"I have no doubt in my mind that Western impact is liable to prove more disintegrating than helpful to the Eastern countries," said Prof. Dewey, in a serious tone.

"What are your views regarding education in India?" I asked.

"So far India had to suffer all kinds of cultural humiliations under the British rule," stated the Professor. "She could not develop her educational system in accordance with her own genius. But now, after regaining her lost freedom, India must try to build up her educational structure on the basis of her ancient culture and traditions."

When he was asked for a message, Prof. Dewey remarked in that wholly admirable tone of humility which is so characteristic of all great men: "What message can I give to India? We have to learn much from an ancient country like yours."

Later, the Professor was kind enough to write down his thoughts in Mrs Agarwal's album. He wrote the following remarkable sentence:

"We look to India to elicit from its old history and culture that which will give help in the guidance of newer and younger peoples."



Prof. Dewey then walked down with us to the adjoining room and showed us his Library and Study Corner. He was very kind to present to me a copy of his latest book entitled *Reconstruction in Philosophy*.

Mrs Dewey and her two adopted children were extremely hospitable and evinced keen interest in India. She herself drove us back to our hotel in that fairly hot afternoon.

It was, indeed, a great privilege to have spent an hour with perhaps the greatest living educationist of the West in modern times. And what a penetrating intellect and a spirit of humility at this ripe age of ninety!

### XIII

#### GOOD OLD ENGLAND!

AFTER A very busy tour of the United States it was a pleasant change to come to London. This was my second visit to England after a long period of fourteen years. Against the rich splendour and excessive mechanization of America, London at first appeared to be rather dilapidated and crestfallen. The scars of the last world war were very prominent in the form of bombed houses and important buildings like the House of Commons and St. Paul's Cathedral which are still under repairs. In contrast with plenty of food in the United States, the London restaurants and cafes were short of everything; while it was difficult to carry bulky newspapers of ninety-two pages in America, the English dailies contained only six pages of thin paper. As compared with the tall skyscrapers of American cities, particularly New York, the London buildings looked very small and worn-out.

But I could soon realize another remarkable difference between America and England. While the United States was young, full of spirits with a fresh outlook, England was old, experienced and austere, with centuries of cultural traditions behind it. America was extremely mechanized and with the hard work of her youthful citizens had achieved fabulous wealth and power. But I could not help feeling that she lacked a sense of proper balance in life. The Americans, despite their richness and plenty, could hardly find any real leisure to enjoy and relax. Due to the scarcity of domestic servants even the ladies of

well-to-do families had to do most of their home work themselves. In England also the people are very hard-working. But they know how to enjoy and rest and keep their identity against the fury, haste and noise of the machine.

Owing to my short stay of about a fortnight in England, I could visit only Oxford, Cambridge and Birmingham for studying the educational systems. Still it was useful to see these old Universities with a background of glorious culture and traditions. The American Universities, like everything else in that country, are on a large scale with ten, twenty, thirty, forty and fifty thousand students as a matter of routine. They provide for a bewildering variety of subjects and have excellent facilities for study in the well-equipped libraries. But they cannot compare with the solid and deeply studious atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge, with provisions for thorough tutorial work in the residential colleges. In London I had the privilege of meeting the great Professor Harold Laski in the London School of Economics. We discussed many social, economic, political and educational problems with special reference to Indian conditions.

It was a privilege to meet Lord Pethick-Lawrence who loves and admires Mahatma Gandhi and entertains the friendliest sentiments for India. Despite his old age, he continues to watch events in our country with great interest and sympathy. He was very sorry that India had to be partitioned; the Cabinet Mission Plan, according to him, was the last chance to keep India united. But events that followed made vivisection of India 'a regrettable necessity'. He expressed the hope that India would

not imitate the Western nations in their blind race after material values of life; she should help the world in attaching greater importance to moral and spiritual standards.

Meeting Mr Henry Polak after many years was a real pleasure. He narrated how he was responsible for giving a copy of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* to Gandhiji in South Africa. Mr Sorensen who met me on several occasions still takes a very active part in all matters connected with India and hopes that closer cultural co-operation between India and England would pave the way for a better World Order. A visit to the Kingsley Hall in the East End where Gandhiji had stayed for some weeks during the Round Table Conference was in the nature of a pilgrimage for me. Miss Doris Lester, sister of Miss Muriel Lester, still works hard for the welfare of poor children. I could walk into a few East End families who gave me vivid reminiscences regarding Gandhiji's stay and his regular morning walks.

Miss Agatha Harrison was very helpful in enabling me to meet friends and admirers of Mahatma Gandhi in London. At a meeting in the Friends International Centre I had the opportunity of explaining in detail the aims and objects of the Sarvodaya Samaj in which several groups and organizations in England were deeply interested. But the scarcity of Gandhian literature is very pronounced in England and it was shocking for me to know that Gandhiji's Autobiography had been published in England for the first time only a few months ago. As compared with the scope of Gandhian books in America, the sales of Gandhiji's books in England are

not impressive. It is sad to think that the average Englishman still continues to be grossly ignorant about India and regards Gandhiji as 'the comical little man who made so much trouble for the British Empire'. The attitude has slightly changed after Gandhiji's death. But the man-in-the street does not concern himself much with India or Gandhiji. He complacently thinks that India under British rule was a happy country; after freedom she has become an arena of conflicts and internecine wars. He is veritably surprised if you tell him that Free India is making rapid progress in all sectors of national life.

Economically, England is in a bad way. Even after accepting American loans amounting to billions of dollars, Britain has not been able to tide over the economic crisis. The shortage of dollars makes the life of the people quite hard; they have to put up with 'austerity standards' in food, dress and other necessities of life. Meat, butter, soap and, till recently, sweets are rationed. Most of the decontrolled articles are meant chiefly for exports and not for the home market. The people, therefore, do not obtain these articles easily. Moreover, there is no choice in varieties. Despite nationwide 'export drive', Britain has been suffering from unfavourable balance of trade and the gold and dollar reserves are being depleted. Sterling is, consequently, going down in foreign markets and, in spite of Sir Stafford Cripps' assurances to the contrary, there was continuous scare in the London market regarding the devaluation of the pound. With a view to meeting the dollar crisis, the Chancellor of Exchequer announced that

imports from the dollar area would be totally stopped for the next three months, and rationing in food may have to be reintroduced soon. It must, however, be said to the credit of Englishmen that they possess a very keen sense of civic duty and national discipline. Though the majority behind the present Labour Government is decreasing, all citizens implicitly follow the directives and policies of the State without creating troubles. This aspect of British democratic traditions has a great lesson for India, because we have yet to learn the art of fulfilling our civic responsibilities.

Politically, Britain was getting ready for the next general elections. I learnt from very reliable sources that the Labour Party had good prospects of returning to power though with a reduced majority. The Conservative Party with Mr Churchill as its leader is not able to inspire confidence among the masses. It was interesting to see the representatives of different parties speaking to the crowds in the Speakers' Corner of the Hyde Park. The Communist and the 'white-collared' Tory were speaking loudly within the distance of a few feet; while even the Communist was getting a peaceful hearing, the Conservative was being continuously heckled with questions and jeers. Sir Stafford Cripps is easily the most important person in the Labour Government and is doing his very best for steering the British nation clear of an economic catastrophe.

India's decision to remain in the British Commonwealth of Nations has been welcomed by all sections of the people in Britain. But if this merely means that India is expected to assist Britain in the next war, I shall

be extremely sorry. I, however, believe that closer cultural co-operation between India and England can be mutually advantageous. India can learn from England several sterling qualities that go to make the British people one of the leading nations of the world. England, in turn, can imbibe India's ancient spiritual traditions as manifested in our great leader Mahatma Gandhi. India and England, as full and equal partners of a Co-operative Commonwealth, can make for a happier and better world to live in.

## XIV

### HAROLD LASKI DISCUSSES INDIAN PROBLEMS

I HAD BEEN looking forward to meeting Prof. Harold Laski soon after our arrival in London. Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, the Director of the London School of Economics, and the uncle of Mira Ben (Miss Slade) was kind enough to invite us and Prof. Laski to lunch with him so that we might have the opportunity of discussing some problems with the Professor at leisure.

As soon as Prof. Laski knew that I was an educationist, he expressed his views about the type of education that should be imparted to the Indian youth after the attainment of political independence. "You must not now send your youngmen to us in the London School of Economics. Instead of studying Economics and Politics, they should be trained in technology, engineering, medicine, veterinary science and other technical subjects, so that they might be helpful in building up a new India on sound and stable foundations." "There is plenty of talent in India," added the Professor. "The main task of your leaders is to find the talent and not allow it to run to waste. The young men, in turn, should learn to serve the country and not merely seek jobs and careers. They should realize that he who seeks happiness loses it, and he who loses himself in service finds it."

"Don't you think that the partition of India was a great disaster?" I asked.

"Partition of a country is always bad; but I think the division of India had become inevitable under the existing



circumstances. The main important problem for you was to see that the British went out of India first. This would have been considerably delayed if partition had not been agreed upon by the Congress and the Muslim League."

Prof. Laski went on: "It was ultimately the transparent sincerity of Lord Pethick-Lawrence which convinced Gandhi and the Congress that the British Government had finally decided to transfer power to the Indian people. This would have been impossible if the Labour Party had not been in power. The Cripps Mission had failed because Lord Linlithgow did not want to be reduced to a figurehead, and Churchill backed him from London. But the Labour Government sent their finest man to India as the last Viceroy. Lord Mountbatten had gone to India with the firm determination of transferring political power to its leaders within the shortest possible time."

"What future do you visualize for India and Pakistan?" was my next question.

"I am sure," remarked Prof. Laski, "both India and Pakistan have a bright future. They can again become one, if only New Delhi continues to maintain her balance and leaves all the mistakes to the lot of Pakistan. Once the Muslim minorities lose fear and feel a real sense of security, the tension between the two Dominions will disappear, and many ways and means could then be found for closer co-operation and co-ordination. But to achieve this ultimate objective, the orthodox Hindu mind must not be allowed to dominate Indian politics."

Our conversation, then, turned to the need for well-organized democratic parties in India. "Political parties

on healthy lines are necessary for making democracy a success," observed the learned Professor. "Without an effective Opposition, democracy degenerates into One-party rule. Even the Labour Party in England has committed certain mistakes because the present Opposition in the British Parliament is so 'silly'. India should be able to develop new political parties on non-communal basis before the next general elections. For example, you can have a Kisan Party representing the peasants, and a Conservative Party representing the capitalists and the landlords. The Socialist Party is already in existence and may be allowed to grow along constructive channels."

"What do you think about the new Indian Constitution?" I enquired.

"I think it is too complicated," replied Prof. Laski. "I believe in simple constitutions. The admixture of British, American and Australian constitutions may not work well in India. At any rate, the chances of success are much better if India follows conventions more than the written laws. Rigid constitutions do not make for elasticity in the political organization of a country."

"Do you agree with Mahatma Gandhi's ideas regarding decentralization?" I asked.

"I am certainly in favour of decentralization, because centralization leads to the atrophy of mankind," answered Prof. Laski. "But," continued the Professor, "some industries have to be on a large scale and therefore centralized."

"Gandhiji also conceded the need for such industries," I said. "But he insisted that these large-scale key industries should be owned and managed by the State."

"I agree with this view entirely," observed Prof. Laski. "The key industries should never be left in private hands."

The Professor paused for a few seconds and then continued:

"Gandhi was a curious mixture of the old and the new; he was the Mystic of the past and the Prophet of the future. I am in general agreement with many of his ideas; but I could never accept his views regarding birth-control. I think India today is in dire need of birth-control to check her rapidly growing population."

"What should be the top-priority in India's economic planning?" I asked Prof. Laski.

"In India, I think, the main problem today is to fill the bellies," remarked the Professor, "because empty bellies do not make for high thinking." "I want to devote the rest of my life to this important work."

"It would be most useful if you could reduce your definite ideas to writing in regard to the increased production of food in India," I said.

"Yes, I am submitting a Memorandum about this problem to Pandit Nehru," stated Prof. Laski.

"Do you think the Labour Party will return to power in England at the next general elections?" I asked.

"I am sure it will again be in a position to form the Government, although it might lose about thirty seats to the Conservatives. The English people are very unlikely to return the Conservatives to power because they cannot afford to forget the experience of inter-war years specially with regard to unemployment. Churchill, by his short-sighted policies, is disrupting the Conservative Party from within. The Communists always enter an

organization which they ultimately desire to break up. In this sense, at least, Churchill could be called a 'Communist'." Prof. Laski's last remark evoked spontaneous laughter.

"How is the Communist Party getting on in England?" was my next query.

"The Communist Party of Britain is not liked by Stalin either," smiled the Professor. "Stalin said that he could not think much of a party which had been able to capture only two seats in the Parliament during the last 20 years."

"What about the Communist Party in India?" enquired Prof. Laski.

"It does succeed in creating occasional trouble in some parts of the country, specially in Bengal and Hyderabad. But I do not think it will be able to make much headway in India because it has not been able to win the confidence of the masses," I replied.

"If you really desire to check the tide of Communism in India," stated Prof. Laski, "you must get rid of your capitalists who behave as our businessmen in England behaved a hundred years ago."

One may or may not agree with Prof. Laski's views on Indian problems; but they, certainly, deserve our serious consideration. It is a pity that was taken away from us so soon.

## XV

### PROSPEROUS BELGIUM:

#### A VISIT TO WATERLOO

THE INDIAN Embassy in Belgium of their own accord were kind enough to arrange several public speeches for me in Brussels and in fact we had to curtail our stay in London by a day or two in order to reach Brussels for fulfilling these programmes.

We were accorded a very warm welcome during our three days' stay in the Capital of Belgium. I had no idea that in a small country like this, there would be so many institutions and persons taking active interest in Mahatma Gandhi's ideology. Mr Ram Linssen who is the organizer of the World Institute of Spiritual Synthesis, has been spreading Gandhiji's message of Truth and Non-violence in Belgium and other European countries for the last several years. He has published a number of brochures and has written many informative and instructive articles in different French magazines and periodicals. The public meetings arranged by him were very well-attended, considering the fact that the month of July when I was in Brussels was the holiday period. This clearly showed how deeply interested the people of Belgium were in the ways and means of resolving conflicts enunciated by Gandhiji for their application to the problem of World Peace and Brotherhood. Belgium has been the battleground of Western Europe for a thousand years owing to its geographical position; it was in the thick of the last two World Wars. When the people of a country like this,

who are otherwise very prosperous and happy, hear of the possibility of another world war it is quite natural for them to feel deeply concerned and perturbed, and specially because the political situation within the country is extremely unstable and even dislocated owing to the heated controversy over the return of the King. At one of the meetings, an ex-Colonel of the Belgian Army asked me details about the Gandhian technique of Non-violent War and wanted to know whether India had decided to follow the same technique for her own defence. I need not describe here the difficulty that I had to face on a hundred and one occasions in answering a question like this. But the important fact that I wish to bring out is that many people in Belgium are vitally concerned with the desirability of evolving a new way of meeting armed violence so as to be immune from the disasters of another global war.

Baron Allard has been the leader of a 'Stop-War' movement in Belgium for a number of years. He has suffered much for his convictions and on his anti-war propaganda. He too very strongly feels that Gandhiji's way of non-violent but dynamic resistance is the only lasting solution of the tangled problem of world conflicts. I, however, made it quite clear in my speeches in Brussels that we cannot stop wars by merely refusing to enrol in the national armies; the Gandhian way involved a long-term preparation in the manner of the 'Constructive Programme'. Without decentralization in the economic and political spheres it was not possible to avoid war because centralization was by nature explosive and violent. Mr Ram Linssen and Baron Allard were, after some discussion, in entire agreement with this view.

Belgium is a bilingual country; in the northern parts people speak Flemish and in the southern portion French. Economic condition is quite satisfactory. It is a hard currency area and on account of favourable balance of trade the people are able to obtain sufficient supplies of all kinds of goods from foreign countries. In the hotels and restaurants, one could find rich and delicious food even for pure vegetarians like us. Although it was not difficult to discern poverty in the midst of plenty, the general impression in Belgium was that of happiness and prosperity as contrasted with most of the other European countries including Britain. The duality in the Belgian character is also curious; they combine the gaiety and wit of the French and the matter-of-factness of the Germans. This fusion of French and German qualities creates a peculiar mixture of 'sensual materialism and ascetic mysticism' in the Belgian people. Although Belgium has been successively under the foreign yoke of France, Spain, Austria and Germany, it still retains a flavour of its own.

Brussels is an artistic and neat town with many streets paved with stones, perhaps, five hundred years old. The Grand Palace, the Palace of Justice, the Parliament House, and a few other buildings in the town are of exceptional architectural beauty. The Universite Libre is one of those special educational institutions on the Continent which are free from any denominational organization and whose members of staff are at liberty to belong to any creed or faith. The guide pointed to us with sarcasm the 'palatial building' belonging to the Communist Embassy of the U.S.S.R.; it was supposed to be the best

building in Brussels. Another peculiar attraction in the Capital is the Manneken Pis, statue of a small boy which has stood filling a small pond in one of the Brussels park for 330 years in the most convenient manner. Le Manneken Pis possesses his own fortune, donated by admiring citizens, and has an enormous wardrobe, worn on local holidays, including a kimono given by the Japanese Ambassador. After World War I, the statue-boy was made a corporal by the French Army because Manneken Pis stood bravely in his restful position, quite indifferent to the dangers of the German invading army.

A visit to Waterloo, about 30 miles from Brussels where Napoleon was defeated by the Duke of Wellington in 1815, was a real treat. Nobody ever likes to meet his Waterloo anywhere in the world; but nobody would also like to miss the wonderful sight of the Waterloo Lion on the Hill. The Lion is of cast iron and weighs 28,000 kgrs. Besides this imposing Lion, the panorama of the battle of Waterloo inside a circular building is of rare artistic perfection. We could see from a distance the different important farms and villages with special historical significance during the battle. The headquarters of the Duke, including the house where he lived for some months in the Waterloo village, were pointed out to us by the jovial guide of the party. While returning to Brussels in the evening, the bus passed through a dense forest named Soignes which had a few beautiful lakes surrounded with pretty gardens. We thus spent a very pleasant afternoon indeed; in addition, we had the satisfaction of seeing one of the most well-known historical sites in Europe.



XVI  
A WEEK IN PARIS :  
AT THE UNESCO

I HAD BEEN to Paris before. So this was my second visit to the elegant city after a period of about fifteen years. Last time I was the guest of Madame Morin, a distinguished French lady who has been an old friend and well-wisher of India. But she was away to Switzerland in connexion with her work. So I had requested the Indian Embassy in Paris to fix public engagements for me this time. They were quite helpful in making our stay in Paris useful from the standpoint of cultural contacts.

It was a privilege to meet Madame Romain Rolland and Madeleine Rolland, sister of Romain Rolland. Both of them have been living in Paris after the War and have done good work for the organization of the Friends of Romain Rolland Society throughout the world. Madame Rolland was anxious that a branch of the Society should be effectively organized in India too. She earnestly felt that the friendship and spiritual kinship between her husband and Mahatma Gandhi should bear fruit in the form of better cultural relations between Europe and Asia. She was gratified to learn about the establishment of the Sarvodaya Samaj as a world-wide Brotherhood of all those who believed in the ideology of Gandhiji, and both she and her sister-in-law gladly enrolled themselves as the 'Sewaks' of the Samaj.

Madame Drevet and Madame Guiyesse are two other old French ladies who have been doing admirable work

for the spread of Gandhian thought in France. They have started a 'Friends of Gandhi Society' as a nucleus for study and research of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas. They have published valuable literature in French and at the time of our visit Madame Drevet was engaged in writing a comprehensive biography of Gandhiji. I was pleasantly surprised to find that several of Gandhiji's books have been translated and published in the French language, and I tried to secure copies of these publications for the Gandhi Museum to be established in India. As a matter of fact, all of Gandhiji's books should have been translated by now in all the languages of the world. But it is a pity that America and England have not cared to publish even the English editions of most of Gandhiji's works. My surprise was, therefore, natural when I found that France had taken a lead in the matter. The Institute of Oriental Living Languages in Paris has also been helpful in this connexion. Prof. Meile, who showed us round the Institute, told me that about 50 French young men had been studying Hindustani seriously besides other languages of India. The Institute possesses one of the richest Oriental libraries in the West. The Quakers International Centre and the International Voluntary Service for Peace whose secretaries I met in Paris, have been trying to inculcate Gandhian ideals among the people through constructive work in the form of Labour Camps and Relief Centres.

Dr John Bowers, Head of the Fundamental Education Section of the UNESCO in Paris was good enough to invite me to speak on Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education to the members of his Department. Dr Chang Chi-Pao,

Asst. Director-General of the UNESCO, presided. A number of workers from other Departments were also present. They were delighted to know that Gandhiji's scheme of education was really 'a step forward' and was, in many ways, ahead of all other similar methods of teaching. The process of 'correlation' or the integration of handwork with most of the school subjects was an eye-opener to many. But I was sorry to know that the UNESCO did not possess any literature on Basic Education although the scheme had been in operation at many places in India during the last twelve years. At the instance of the head of the 'Clearing House' of Fundamental Education, I reduced my lecture to writing and left a copy in the UNESCO office for being utilized in any way they wished. Although I do not have much faith in the future of the U.N.O. for various reasons, I strongly feel that we should all help non-governmental specialized agencies like the UNESCO in their cultural and humanitarian activities.

We were, by mere chance, in Paris on the Bastille Day, July 14, the day on which the capture of the famous fortress and prison marked the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789. The fourteenth of July in France is, therefore, a day of great national celebrations. In the morning, there was a magnificent Military Parade at which all the important foreign Diplomats and Ambassadors were present. At night there was a jubilant festival of lights and fireworks. During the day, we took the opportunity of visiting some of the notable places of interest in Paris. The Louvre Palace was, of course, the first to be visited; it is the largest and most beautiful in

the world, covering 600,000 square feet—three times larger than the Vatican in Rome. The Louvre is renowned for its architecture and also for its innumerable and unequalled art treasures. It is really fortunate that this Palace has survived the horrors and destruction of the last two World Wars. Notre-Dame Cathedral is a masterpiece of Middle Ages art built during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As the spiritual centre of the Capital, Notre-Dame, where the High Clergy receives the Presidents, sums up the history, soul and faith of the French nation. At night, an indirect lighting gives a mysterious life to the old stones, bringing out strange effects and revealing to the surprised eye unsuspected details. The inside of the Cathedral, 110 ft. high and, 400 ft. long, is remarkable for the boldness of its architecture, imitating the shape of an upset boat.

Other places of interest were the Arch of Triumph, 140 ft. high, richly sculptured and the largest monument of its kind; the Chaillot Palace where the UNESCO was housed in the beginning and where Pandit Nehru addressed a special session of the U.N.O. two years ago; the Eiffel Tower which was built by Engineer Eiffel for the Universal Exhibition of 1900, raising towards the sky its 900 ft. of metallic lace; the Grand Opera or National Academy of Music and Dance which is the biggest theatre in the world covering a superstructure of 33,000 ft. with luxurious marbles and golden bronze ornaments; the Sacred Heart Basilica at the top of the hill, which resembles to some extent India's Taj Mahal; the Pantheon with its magnificent Greek architecture where are buried famous Frenchmen like Voltaire, Victor Hugo, Rousseau, and Emile Zola.

## 'THE TWO WORLDS

The next day we visited the Palace of Versailles which is known all over the world not only for its art and architecture but also as venue of the Treaty of Versailles after the first World War. Planned by Louis XIV, the Palace is the summary of the activity of the best artists of the time who gathered round the 'Great King'. In the central part of the Palace, the marble stairs and the apartments of Marie Antoinette, magnificently decorated with pieces of the old artistic furniture, attract the visitor's eye. The Versailles Park surrounding the Palace is also capitivating, with its wide lawns profusely decorated with statues of rare beauty. Standing before the renowned Palace, one remembers a past of pomp and magnificence the wide panoramas enlivened with the crowd of the courtiers sumptuously dressed and walking with grace. That glorious past is now only a matter of history in dull school text-books.

France is a country of exquisite art, specially in the domain of architecture and sculpture. But she lacks discipline and seriousness in national life. That is why we hear of changes in the French Ministry almost every day. The queue system, which is a regular feature of social life in Britain only 20 miles across the Channel, is conspicuous by its absence in Paris. The standard of honesty and civic sense is also by no means high in France. The economic condition of the country owing to inflation is quite hard for the masses, although Paris continues to be the centre of fashions, specially in regard to dress, for the whole world. We may love France, but it is difficult to respect her.

## XVII

### EDUCATIONAL CONGRESS AT BERNE: RIGHTS AND DUTIES

WE HAD thought of visiting Norway, Sweden and Denmark also in the course of this world tour. The best plan would have been to go to Oslo direct from London. But pressing letters had reached me to the effect that I must attend the World Educational Congress to be held at Berne as India's delegate. The dates of this Congress compelled me to cancel my programme of visiting Denmark and the Scandinavian countries, and consequently, I proceeded from London to Paris via Brussels, and after a week's stay in France left for Berne, the Swiss Capital.

The Educational Congress had been organized by the World Organization of the Teaching Profession which has its Headquarters at Washington. Representatives from about twenty-two countries including the United States of America, Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Finland, Luxembourg, Iceland, Malta, New Zealand, Turkey, Thailand and Germany, attended. Observers from the United Nations Organization and the UNESCO also attended the deliberations of the Congress. As I was the only delegate from India, I stayed in Berne for full six days in order to be able to participate in the work of the Congress throughout the sessions.

The first four days of the Congress were occupied by reports from different countries regarding the economic conditions of teachers relating to salaries, tenure of

service, pensions, etc. Although it was very revealing to find that the economic status of teachers in all the countries was comparatively very low and that the teachers of the United States were, perhaps, the most dissatisfied of all the representatives, I got impatient with this never-ending discussion of 'loaves and fishes'. So I raised a point of order and asked the President whether the Educational Congress was convened only for discussing the problem of salaries and pensions. The world was really in a bad way and a third world war threatened the whole of humanity. Had we teachers of 22 different countries any responsibility towards the maintenance of world peace? This question caught the imagination of several other delegates, and a very significant discussion ensued. I emphasized the duties of teachers along with their rights. All national Governments, of course, have to realize sooner than later the paramount importance of teachers in building up a healthy, prosperous, democratic State and, therefore, the imperative necessity of safeguarding the legitimate rights of teachers. But, in turn, the teachers of the world have also to realize their own sacred duties towards the boys and girls entrusted to their care. They should always bear in mind that the well-being of the children under their supervision must be their first concern in life. On the moral influence that they are able to exercise upon the rising generations through their daily life and work will depend the lasting progress of different nations and of the world as a whole. I was asked to incorporate these ideas in a formal resolution which could be placed before the Congress for adoption. This, of course, I promptly did, and the Congress passed

the resolution on Rights and Duties of teachers unanimously and with full enthusiasm.

I have always felt very strongly that teachers should never allow themselves to be gradually pushed towards cheap Trade Unionism like other professions. If the world is to be really made safe for democracy, teachers have a very important duty to perform. They should not tie themselves to any political 'ism' so long as they are teachers; the young minds under their care should be given full opportunities to discriminate between the right and wrong of every side and ultimately form their own opinions. No stereotyped ideas should be forced on their pliable minds. Thus, we as teachers must try to maintain 'political neutrality' almost religiously. Communism, for example, cannot be checked by suppression of opinions; it can only be neutralized by the personalities of those teachers who insist on freedom of thought and all-sided study of the human problems facing the world today. If teachers acquit themselves worthily in this matter, no power on earth can withhold their just rights and privileges. But if they also begin behaving like other professions, clamouring for their salaries and tenures of service through Unions, there seems to be no hope for mankind.

Dr William Russell, who presided over the Congress, emphasized in his own unique style the same view. The atmosphere of the whole Congress was raised to a very high level and, I am sure, the delegates returned to their respective countries as better teachers and educationists.

After the Educational Congress, the organizers arranged for sight-seeing tours in different parts of Switzerland.



As we had made previous arrangements for visiting Interlaken and Geneva, we left Berne by train on the following day. After staying in Geneva for a few days where we visited the Headquarters of the League of Nations now used for the United Nations, we proceeded to the beautiful city of Interlaken, situated between two big Lakes, as the very name suggests. Here we climbed up the snow-capped Jungfrau on a sunny day and visited the grand Ice Palace with its white cold automobile and tables of ice. This was our first experience of walking on snow for a fairly long distance. Going up the mountains on 'chair-lifts' was also a novel experience at Grindelwald on our way back from Jungfrau. Even at night we could see the white top of the Jungfrau in moonlight through the window of our room in the hotel at Interlaken. It was a sight that really beggars description!

## XVIII

### SWITZERLAND FOLLOWS GANDHI

SWITZERLAND is well known for its natural beauty with its profusion of interspersed lakes and hills and its many mountains capped with snow. But during our stay in this country of about three weeks, I was more taken up with a study of the social, economic, educational and political aspects of its national life. I found it most instructive to visit the rural areas with their decentralized socio-economic organization and was delighted to find that Switzerland, besides being a charming country, was also a good but silent follower of the ideals for which Mahatma Gandhi lived and died. Japan is a land of small-scale industrial organization and also possesses very picturesque countryside. But it went the wrong way and needs a Gandhi to raise it out of its present slough of despair. America admires Gandhi but is far away yet from most of his ideals. It was a happy experience to find that Switzerland had been, perhaps without knowing it, following Gandhi all these decades.

It was, indeed, a great achievement for this small country in the heart of Europe to be able to keep out of the last two World Wars that shook the bigger countries to the very foundations. This was not a matter of chance. The whole atmosphere and cultural outlook of Switzerland was at the back of this dignified and dynamic neutrality. This small but active country has been the home of many activities that benefit the whole of humanity, like the International Red Cross, Universal Postal Union,

International Bureau for the Protection of Intellectual Property, and the League of Nations. The monuments of architectural beauty and grandeur that housed the last-named organization are now being used by the U.N. O.; but it is a pity that several of its important sections are being gradually shifted to New York. Having seen the site where the new U.N.O. skyscraper is being constructed in New York, I can say without hesitation that Geneva is an ideal place for the work of Universal peace; New York is, perhaps, the worst. However, when it comes to power politics, considerations like Switzerland's peculiar aptitude for internationalism and peace count for nothing.

The Swiss people are, by nature, a peace-loving and contented nation who have never had aggressive designs on their neighbours. They are satisfied with their small country and its natural resources which are by no means rich. They are extraordinarily hard-working, intelligent, honest and resourceful. The Swiss never dream of exploiting another country, but neither will they ever allow another nation to exploit their Fatherland. They get up early in the morning, work hard during the whole day in their fields, factories or workshops and retire to bed much earlier than any other peoples in Europe. After 9 O'clock, it is almost impossible to find any shop open; all the restaurants are closed by that hour. Cars are not allowed to blow horns after nine at night because people should not be disturbed in their well-deserved sleep and rest after the day's toil. The Swiss people have a keen sense of art for practical purposes.

They do not believe in art for art's sake, nor in art for the sake of life; they have succeeded in making of life itself a fine art. The numerous scientific devices they have introduced in all their homes for making the lives of the masses happier and healthier are very note-worthy. They love flowers: every house has fresh flowers placed in wooden cases outside the windows. They do not have excess of anything in their lives; they have been able to attain a balance in life which helps them to maintain an attitude of peace, international friendship and co-operative effort.

Gandhiji always stood for decentralized democracy in the form of village communities enjoying substantial political powers. The constitutional structure of Switzerland, with the maximum of local self-sufficiency and self-government for the twenty-two Cantons and the minimum of control by the Federal Government, is a living example of the old Panchayat Raj which was in existence in India from times immemorial. The Canton Governments safeguard and preserve their local freedom in matters of education, agriculture, industry, public health and sanitation with the greatest care. The 3,107 Communes which constitute the 22 Cantons, in turn, maintain their own independence in local affairs. The Commune is the cell in the organism of Swiss democracy; all public activity has its origin here, and it is in every sense of the word, a school of citizenship. Here every citizen co-operates in every decision and all governing bodies are elected by the people's vote. It is, thus, from the Commune that the Confederation draws its strength. In Switzerland, the national will grows from below upwards; it is not imposed from the top by a centralized authority.

All Swiss people are equal before the law irrespective of any distinctions of language, race, family, or economic status. The Federal Government at Berne has jurisdiction in specified matters of common concern like defence, transport and communications, foreign trade and national planning. Berne is only a Federal City with the Parliament and the Federal Court; it is not a Swiss Paris or Washington. Each Canton has its own capital, rural or urban, according to its requirements. The election constituencies are so small that the voters have every opportunity of knowing the candidates quite intimately. There is ample scope for indirect elections by way of sending representatives from the Cantons to the Centre.

The Ministers or members of the Federal Council are not members of the Federal Assembly; if they are, they have to resign on their appointment as Ministers by that body. They are whole-time salaried public servants who are supposed to be specialists of different subjects; they are allowed to hold office till they themselves retire or if there is a very serious charge against them. The annual election of the President and the Vice-President is a mere matter of routine. The Vice-President automatically becomes the President, and the next Vice-President is elected from different parties by rotation without the heat that is generally associated with such elections in other countries. The provisions of 'referendum' and 'initiative' in the Swiss Constitution are its distinguishing features which help to maintain a living contact with the masses. This decentralization in political life keeps the rural folk in Switzerland very much alive to their rights as well as duties. The Communes manage their day-to-day affairs

with great competence and a keen sense of responsibility; most of them run their own daily newspapers which have a good circulation in their respective areas. The Swiss countryside is thus a living organism and not a mere appendage to a powerful centre. On the occasion of national festivals like the first of August, people go from cities to villages to witness the celebrations. Their folk-dance and music is the best part of their national culture. At the time of the World Educational Congress at Berne, the organizers had arranged for a variety entertainment which mainly consisted of rural music and dance. The Swiss representatives told the other delegates that their folk music was the best specimen of Swiss culture and art.

In the economic sphere, Switzerland is again a follower of the Gandhian pattern of economic planning. It is a country of small-scale farming and decentralized industrial production. As in Japan, agriculture is mostly done by hand or with the help of bullocks and horses. Poorer farmers use cows also for ploughing their fields. The village cottages are like small factories of numerous types of handicrafts like spinning, weaving, wood-carving, toy-making, metal-work and watch-making. Even regular factories in Switzerland are not very big; they are dispersed throughout the countryside and not concentrated in cities. Zurich is the largest industrial town; but its population is not more than 35 lakhs. It is not congested and smoky like London or New York. Swiss industries have eliminated the use of coal almost completely; they have developed hydro-electricity on a large scale. The power-stations are not centralized either; there are about

6,000 of them spread throughout the country. Owing to absence of smoke, the industrial cities are clean, gay and artistic. Berne, the Federal City, is a small, quiet and neat town with a population of 1,35,000. The watch-industry, the most well-known of Switzerland's, is not concentrated in big factories or large cities: it is decentralized in numerous villages, each preparing in different cottage workshops either the various parts of watches or the whole watch. Same is the case with other Swiss industries.

Socially, the Swiss people have developed the fine and rare art of living together peacefully with different languages, cultures and religions. There are four main linguistic groups in Switzerland,—the Germans, the French, the Italians and the Romanche. There is no rivalry or bitterness between these linguistic groups or regions; educated citizens are well-up in all the three main languages; Romanche is spoken only in the hilly regions of the north. Public notices are printed in the three languages, and the proceedings of the Federal Assembly are conducted in all the three without any difficulty. The social relations between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in Switzerland are comparatively much happier and smoother. The cleavage between cities and villages is not as pronounced as in other European countries. The daily life of an average Swiss man or woman is quite simple; there are very few cinemas or theatres. During summer when most of the tourists visit this beautiful country, all the cinema houses are closed because the Swiss employees go out on a holiday. The so-called 'night life' is almost nil in

Switzerland. The Swiss people are also the cleanest in the world; their villages and cities are spotless. The Cantons have a special department of sanitary secret intelligence with a vigilant personnel--any citizen breaking the rules of hygiene and sanitation first gets a warning and then heavy fines and even imprisonment.

Educationally, Switzerland is very much advanced. There are seven good Universities in this small country with many departments of specialized study, particularly in technology and medicine. Primary and secondary schools are spread throughout the country in both cities and villages. There is no uniform system of education formulated by the Federal authority; each Canton has its own organization and specialities. But there is mutual co-ordination and healthy emulation. The average of public health is also very high: there are very few diseases prevalent among the people. Infant mortality is considerably low and the average life-expectation is sixty years. The Cantons and the Communes maintain efficient doctors in well-equipped hospitals; there are about 4,000 doctors, or one doctor for every 1,175 inhabitants. To promote the health of the people there is an active sports and gymnastic movement in Switzerland. It is significant to know that there is no system of capital punishment for even the most serious crimes like murder. The Swiss regard crimes as maladies to be cured and not as sins to be punished.

The organization of military training in Switzerland is novel and unique. There is no standing army or professional militia. There is only what may be called a territorial force or national militia which consists of all



able-bodied male citizens of the country above the age of 20. Every adult has to undergo military training for three months to begin with. He must thereafter attend a military training camp for three weeks every year till the age of forty-eight. This age-limit has been extended to 60 since the last War. Thus every male citizen, including professors, doctors, businessmen and the highest State officers, is a trained soldier. He is allowed to keep his arms at home, but nobody ever uses these arms for private purposes; they are to be employed only for war in the event of a national emergency. Persons in private or public services continue to draw their usual salaries during the annual military training; the State pays only for their board and lodging during the period. Expenditure on the army is, thus, comparatively very small in Switzerland. But in case of war, the whole Swiss nation can rise up in armed revolt against the aggressor.

Curiously enough, women in Switzerland have no votes and, therefore, no civic responsibilities. The women folk are not eager to obtain the right of voting either. When I asked some of them as to why they do not clamour for their legitimate rights, they quietly remarked: "In our country, voting is very frequent owing to the system of referendum. Why should both of us so frequently lock our houses and go to the polls? The husband and wife discuss the topics together in the family, and then the males go and register their votes at their convenience." The feeling of peace is innate among the Swiss people. Although there is compulsory military training for all adults, I did not witness any traces of 'militarism' among the masses.

There is one point, however, which makes me feel sad. Although the Swiss nation follows Gandhian ideals in many respects, they waste about ten per cent of their national income on liquors. In addition to the wine produced in their own country, they import wine to the tune of forty million Swiss Francs every year. Approximately ten per cent of their population suffers from infirmity of body or mind owing to this evil habit of drinking. It is hopeful to know that the Blue Cross movement against the use of alcoholic drinks is making steady headway in Switzerland and people are gradually reducing the quantity of wine they consume. Apple juice under the label of 'non-alcoholic wine' is gaining popularity day by day.

There is one striking trait of Swiss character: they admit and announce their own faults and shortcomings even to foreign visitors without hesitation. When you praise their beautiful country and the fine people, they will humbly observe: "But, my friend, do not see our good points only; we have several defects also, for which we feel ashamed!" The evil of drink was pointed out to me by a Swiss himself otherwise I would not have known about it at all. This habit of self-criticism is a most healthy trait of Swiss character and Swiss culture, which is sadly lacking among most of the other countries that we visited.

Switzerland is thus a remarkable country, and we in India can learn a good deal from the Swiss people. I earnestly feel that closer cultural ties between India and Switzerland will be mutually beneficial. Switzerland is small, but it is perhaps her very smallness that makes

her a great nation. India is big, but it is probably her bigness that has been the cause of her smallness in the comity of nations. If India and Switzerland were to join together and work hand in hand on the basis of decentralization and the development of cottage industries, great things could be achieved for world peace and human progress. Mahatma Gandhi can be a common source of inspiration and guidance in this great and noble endeavour.

## XIX

### THREE DAYS AT CAUX: MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

IT WAS by mere chance that we visited Caux during our tour of Switzerland. A few friends in Geneva told me that it would be worth our while to spend a few days at a place up the hill near Montreaux where the Moral Re-Armament Group has established a big centre for the work of international peace. Though I had heard before about the Moral Re-Armament Movement, I must confess I had no very clear idea about it. We therefore decided to avail of the opportunity to see the activities of this movement at first hand. Accordingly, we wrote to the secretary of Mr Frank Buchman who is the founder of the M. R. A. in its present form. His reply came very promptly with a warmth of welcome which provided an additional attraction. And so we spent at Caux three of the most instructive days of this tour of ours. There was a pleasant voyage from Geneva to Montreaux through the beautiful Lake by steamer, and on reaching Caux at the top of the high hill, a beautiful panorama of glittering lights below. The reflection of these lights in the Lake of Geneva presented a superb view that night. It was, indeed, a sight for the gods.

A superficial view of the M. R. A. would not do, of course. Next morning we went round all the departments of the big Colony, consisting of three nice buildings which were formerly very fashionable hotels in Switzerland. I understand that these hotels were

purchased by the supporters of the M. R. A. and handed over to Mr Buchman for establishing a Summer Centre. All the three buildings accommodate about 1,200 persons and the daily expenses of this Colony come to about fifteen thousand rupees. Money for these expenses flows to Caux from all parts of the world partly in cash and partly in kind. There are hardly any servants; the inmates and guests do most of their work themselves. They clean the rooms and the halls, cut vegetables and cook the meals and serve them by batches. They have their own Photo Department, Printing Department, Music and Drama Section. The programmes for meetings in the morning and in the afternoon are arranged with utmost care and tact: there is no room for haphazard fixtures or embarrassing situations. I may add that the holding of public meetings here has been reduced to both an art and a science. Although there is an element of show and careful, studied rehearsals are made before the actual meetings it is impossible not to be impressed by their transparent sincerity and intensity of emotion.

The Moral Re-Armament movement rests on Four Absolute Virtues, namely, absolute love, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute honesty. How far it is possible in the modern world to cultivate *absolute* virtues is a different matter. But the fact remains that the cultivation of these four great virtues in the present war-weary and violent world is of the utmost importance. This movement is in the nature of a moral and spiritual renaissance for the Western world: it lays down new values of life in this age of materialism. The dynamic philosophy of change also forms an integral part of the

M. R. A. The group sincerely believes that all individuals, even the most hard-headed and hard-hearted, can change; and when individuals change, nations can change. With the change in nations will come automatically a change in the world atmosphere. The followers of Frank Buchman believe in 'God's guidance' in the midst of baffling problems and it is this 'Forgotten Factor' which they think should be revived in our daily lives. Their drama and film '*The Forgotten Factor*' points out this very need in the sphere of industrial conflicts. At the time of our visit, the Group at Caux was busy preparing a new film called '*The Good Road*' in thirteen different languages. It showed how different nations of the world, both in the West and in the East, could evolve a better social and economic order through mutual co-operation in place of the existing international disharmony and competition. Mr Roger Hicks, one of the important workers of the movement, had started a 'College of the Good Road' for training young men in this new ideology. The whole place was humming with activity and everybody seemed to be fired with a missionary zeal and a living faith rarely found among workers of modern institutions. Almost all nations of the world were represented at Caux and there was a wonderful atmosphere of cordiality and good-will.

Dr Frank Buchman belonged to the Oxford Group movement in the beginning of this century. Later he developed his own ideas and formed a nucleus of international fellowship in the form of Moral Re-Armament. He has his Centres in many parts of the world, and people of his Group work ceaselessly for resolving conflicts

in various spheres. In the domestic sphere, they resolve conflicts between wives and husbands. During our short stay at Caux, several couples confessed publicly that they had come there almost prepared for a divorce, but their stay at Caux had remarkably changed them and they were going back a happy family. Resolving conflicts in the industrial sphere is one of the main activities of the M. R. A. Regular work of conciliation is being carried on in England, America, Germany and other countries, with the result that strikes have been considerably reduced and the relations between the owners and workers have been greatly improved. This activity of Frank Buchman has been misconstrued in some quarters, so much so that the M. R. A. has been charged with forming an unholy alliance with capitalists who, it is said, finance the movement for putting down the socialist and communist forces. There were even charges of secretly co-operating with Hitler and Mussolini during the last War—wild charges, made out of jealousy and rivalry, I am persuaded.

Dr Buchman, who is known simply as 'Frank' among his followers, has a good personality and possesses remarkable powers of organization. He is quiet and unassuming, and does not seem to like any kind of hero-worship. He does not like to appear on the dais himself and prefers to sit among the audience, sometimes unnoticed in a corner. He always gives chances to young men and women in organizing meetings and public programmes in order to train them. I found that, in the dynamic atmosphere at Caux, even Communists who stayed there for a few days confessed that they had

been able to change their outlook on life very substantially. This was, surely, a remarkable achievement. At Caux I found important personalities from different parts of the globe. Leaders of different political parties of one country came together at Caux and went back with their differences ironed out. Well-known military leaders came here and dedicated themselves to peace and international brotherhood. Among the Indians at Caux, the name of Lady Sinha and her young son ought to be mentioned. She has been taking a very active part in this movement during the last several years.

Of course, no person or institution in the world can claim perfection. The Moral Re-Armament movement also may have certain shortcomings and defects. I cannot claim to judge them with the limited knowledge that I now possess about their varied activities. But I can say without hesitation that Frank Buchman's work is worthy of appreciation by all those who are anxious to establish peace and good-will among men.



## XX

### IN THE LAND OF HITLER

IT WAS with considerable difficulty that I could obtain the necessary visa for Berlin, although the Allied Military Permit for the British, French and American Zones was comparatively an easy affair. Since I had been travelling mostly by air, I decided to go by train from Zurich to Frankfurt. The German trains are usually crowded and the third class is as bad as that of the Indian Railways. On both sides of the Railway line (or the Railroad as it is called in Europe and America) I could see hundreds of bombed houses throughout the long journey. Owing to bad rainfall, crops were withering away and the whole countryside presented an arid appearance. Hardly anything to eat was available on the journey except ice-cream and peaches. Though I am not fond of chocolates, I had to eat these as a matter of necessity—a packet of them given by a friend in Berne came in most handy on this journey.

Frankfurt is the administrative Headquarters of the French, British and American Zones of Germany. It was heavily bombed during the last war. Wiesbaden, where we stayed for a few days, is a delightful summer resort, with famous sulphur springs. Here I could visit a few educational institutions. We also got a glimpse here of the beautiful Rhine Valley with old Castles and green vineyards. The Indian Consul advised me to go by air from Frankfurt to Berlin because trains have to pass through the Russian Zone which, more often than not,





AT THE BROADCASTING HOUSE IN BERLIN

means unexpected and endless trouble and harassment for the travellers. Only a few weeks before our arrival, a batch of American tourists had been detained by the Russian police and after considerable detention and insulting behaviour they were asked to go back to Frankfurt. A strong protest was lodged with the Russian Government by the American Headquarters but it was of no avail. We, therefore, decided not to take any risk and made arrangements for booking our seats by air. But, ultimately, we did get a taste of the Russian Zone while travelling from Berlin to Prague. Although the driver and both of us had the necessary permits with us, the Russian soldier bluntly stopped us with the remark that the car had no special permit. All arguments were futile, because the Russian military authorities do not seem to believe in any discussions. So we had to walk about six furlongs with our luggage and just managed to catch our plane for Czechoslovakia. I phoned to the Indian Military Mission from the Airport and told them the whole story. They were extremely sorry to hear it because if we had missed the plane anything could have happened to us in the Russian Zone that evening.

Berlin is now a heap of ruins; about sixty per cent of the city buildings were hit by bombs during the last phase of the World War. Hotel accommodation in Berlin is, therefore, a difficult problem. A few good hotels that still stand unbombed are mostly occupied by the Allied Personnel. However, the Indian Military Mission was successful in reserving suitable rooms for us in one of the hotels where we could obtain vegetarian meals. The Americans are trying hard to clear the debris. But it

appears to be an almost impossible task. I think about fifty per cent of the buildings on both sides of the main roads in Berlin are beyond repair: there is no alternative but to pull them down. Sometimes we could see families living only in one repaired room of a big building which was lying bombed like a fearful ghost. Berlin used to be one of the most elegant, and perhaps the cleanest city in Europe. But now it is like a graveyard at night with a few lights glittering in the rows of dilapidated houses.

The German Capital is still divided into four sectors, the American, the British, the French and the Russian. Transport in the first three sectors is not difficult; people can pass from one sector to another without any checking by the police of the respective Allied Forces. But going to the Russian Sector is a veritable trial; you might thank your stars if you came back without any untoward incident. I was told that kidnapping of persons and their cars was a daily occurrence in the Russian sector. We were fortunate in obtaining a car of the British Embassy for touring round the Russian sector. So there was no trouble. However, we were warned not to use our camera; otherwise, the Russian police might pull us out by the neck without any formalities. Since we behaved according to the rules of the Russian police, we could come back quite safely after seeing the ruins of some of the important buildings like the Reichstag, Hitler's Balcony in the Chancellery, Goebells' Information Ministry, and the War Ministry. The last air-raid shelter where the Fuehrer is believed to have electrocuted himself was also shown to us from a distance. Some people in Germany still fondly believe that Hitler is alive. But, in

fact, nobody definitely knows what actually happened to him. Hitler continues to be a myth in Germany.

The Tier Gardens which were a pride of Berlin with their artistic statues of old kings and statesmen, are now lying unused like a graveyard with the marble statues scattered upside down owing to heavy bombing. The Humbolt University and the Public Library escaped bombing and are intact. We could also visit the Technical University of Berlin and discuss several problems of practical training with the Director. A visit to the Olympic Stadium was reminiscent of the past glory of Hitler and Germany; it is now lying desolate, perhaps haunted by ghosts of the Nazi leaders. On our way to the Stadium, we had a look at the Hess Prison.

The economic condition of Germany is extremely hard and pathetic. Owing to large-scale bombing, the housing problem has assumed serious proportions. In Berlin, sometimes one could find several families huddled together in one room. About 35 per cent of the people are unemployed because of industrial disorganization and destruction of factories. Instead of setting up the old factories, the Americans have been systematically dismantling them. This is still a very sore point with the Germans who openly accuse the Americans of killing German industry in order to make Germany safe for American capital goods. In order to relieve the economic distress arising out of unemployment, all employed persons have to pay a tax of about 25 per cent of their incomes above a certain minimum. There are also heavy taxes on industrial incomes, approximately amounting to 60 per cent. During the war, the Germans had enough

money but nothing much to buy; now the shops are full of fancy American goods but there is no money to buy them with. German men and women standing before the show-windows of American shops without the money to buy what they saw was a very common sight in Berlin. About two years ago, the old inflated German currency was scrapped by the Allied Powers, and every German, rich or poor, was given 40 Marks to re-start his earthly existence. Thus the old aristocratic society has vanished, and the Allies can be given the credit of launching 'communism' of a new brand in the land of Hitler. Conditions obtaining in the Russian Zone were much worse. One Western Mark could be easily exchanged for five Eastern Marks. There was also scarcity of consumer goods in the Russian sector. But there were no rigid restrictions on the flow of commodities from the West to the East.

As in Japan so in Germany, the Americans are trying to teach 'democracy' to the Germans. The people in Hitler's land have hardly any respect for the young boys of Uncle Sam. In the beginning, the American soldiers behaved childishly in Germany by burning furniture and food on the streets. There were mass 'trials' immediately after occupation and all those who were suspected of being Nazis were severely punished and even killed. Sending them to prison, stopping their pensions and dismissing them from employment were matters of ordinary routine. The Americans enlisted the help of the much-persecuted Jews in suppressing all those who belonged to the party of Hitler. Even now most of the Ministers who form the 'puppet' Government in Western Germany

are Jews. That is why the Germans still harbour strong hatred towards the Jews and regard them as national enemies. The Americans try to humiliate the 'German nationals' to this day by closing all the important hotels, swimming-pools and other public places to them. They are not allowed to board the buses of Allied forces even though they might run empty. The Germans have to use a separate system of transport with terribly crowded trams and buses. The educational system of Germany is also being remodelled by the Americans in order to make it more 'democratic'. For example, the English language has been given a much more important place in the syllabus of schools. Formerly, there was no co-education at the secondary stage in Germany. Now these regulations are being amended. I was surprised to find that in Germany there was no queue system in public life. People in Hitler's land are, of course, thorough and hard-working, but they lack initiative and imagination.

Despite political and economic hardships, the spirit of the German nation appeared to be unbroken. They were not repentant of the doings of their Fuehrer, and the common people believed that he had succeeded in doing for their economic welfare what nobody else could ever do. If Hitler were to appear again on the scene by any chance, it is certain that the majority of the people would implicitly follow him. In this connexion, it was very significant to read in papers that shouts of 'Heil Hitler' were heard in the West German Parliament when the President announced that the National Right Group wished to be known as the German Reichs Party.



The Germans are, by nature, very diligent and disciplined. But they require a hero to order and direct them. On the eve of the general elections in Western Germany, the people and the Press were openly abusing the Americans and other Allied Powers for having unthinkingly destroyed their Fatherland. The U.S.A. and Britain are very anxious to crush the rushing tide of Communism in Europe and seek the help of the Germans in this up-hill task. The Germans, therefore, regard the Americans as puerile and short-sighted in politics and international affairs. "If you really desire to enlist our help in destroying Communism, first rebuild our country, hand over complete political power to us, stop dismantling our factories, and then we will consider!"—this is the typical feeling of an average German today. The Americans are, at present, humouring the Germans because their immediate interest is to wipe out Soviet Russia. In their inordinate anxiety to annihilate Communism they are even actively encouraging the old Nazi elements. This is tragedy too deep for tears. The world seems to be destined to tear itself between Fascism and Communism on the royal road to complete destruction.

## XXI

### A PEEP BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN:

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA GOES 'RED'

EVEN before I left New Delhi, I had tried very hard to obtain the necessary visa for the U.S.S.R. An approach to the Russian Embassy through the Government of India was not found to be at all helpful. The position seemed to be like this: those who were strongly recommended by the Indian Government were looked upon with disfavour by the Soviet authorities, and those whom the Soviet Government wanted to go to the U.S.S.R. were not being given the necessary facilities by the Government of India. Under the circumstances, I decided to approach the Russian Embassy in Delhi directly through one of the Travel Agencies. On filling up the required application which was in the nature of a long Questionnaire, the Russian Consul wanted me and Mrs Agarwal to submit detailed biographies together with a complete set of books that I had published. This order was also complied with, although quite reluctantly. But I would suggest that those friends who require an occasion to write their autobiographies will be furnished with one if they but send an application to the Soviet Embassy for a visa.

The Russian authorities at Delhi assured me that my application would be favourably considered, although the ultimate decision lay in the hands of Moscow officers. They asked for a copy of the itinerary of my world tour and promised to inform me, possibly by

cable, about the final reply to my application. And so we enquired throughout the tour at different centres of the Russian Embassy, first in Washington, then in London, and subsequently at Paris, Berne, Berlin, Prague, Rome and Istanbul. But to no avail. The Russian Consuls would neither say 'yes' nor 'no'. They would keep mum and, at the end, promise to contact Moscow and send the necessary information about the reply as early as possible. But one might as well save one's breath ~~since the reply never comes~~. I even wonder whether the applications are sent to Moscow at all. In any case, one thing is very clear—that the Russian authorities are, at present, extremely cautious in granting any visas; only hundred per cent 'safe' persons are allowed to cross the Iron Curtain. The reasons for maintaining this Iron Curtain are very controversial. The Americans and people of Western Europe tell you that the standard of living of the Russian masses is still so low that they dare not allow foreign tourists to enter their country and see the naked failure of Communism with their own eyes. The Russians or people of Eastern Europe try to convince you that the capitalist countries are bent upon destroying Communism and if their tourists are allowed to go to the Soviet Union, they would use all kinds of unfair means to undermine the new economic order in Russia. Both these points of view are partially right and real truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Although it was, after all, not possible to visit the U.S.S.R., we were very fortunate in being able to obtain the visa for Czechoslovakia which is now completely

behind the Iron Curtain. The Government of India maintains an Embassy at Prague and the members of this Embassy including the Ambassador were very helpful in introducing us to various sections of people in Czechoslovakia. The existing Government at Prague is still called a Coalition or a National Front; but the fact is that it is completely in the hands of the Communist Party under the leadership of Comrade Klement Gottwald who is the President of the Republic. In every office, public institution, or even a shop, you would almost inevitably notice hanging on the walls side by side the two photographs of Stalin and Gottwald. All the book-shops are full of 'red' literature; the picture houses and theatres can display hardly anything that is not 'red'. The price of evincing any difference with the 'red' regime is persecution, imprisonment and ultimately death.

Ever since the enactment of the new Constitution of May 9th, 1948, the Communist Government in Czechoslovakia has been systematically following its 'red' policy with an iron hand. All the palaces and castles of rich dukes and millionaires have been confiscated, or, in Communistic terminology, 'nationalized'; they have been given either to Trade Unions, or to the Writers' Associations or are being used for Government offices, Art Galleries or Museums. All the important factories in the country have also been 'nationalized' without any compensation whatsoever. The big shops are being taken over gradually according to a definite schedule. The capitalists and moneyed persons have no place in social life; many of them have escaped to the neighbouring countries leaving all their immovable property

behind. To give a pathetic example, the person who was working as chauffeur of the Indian Ambassador was, in the previous regime, a prosperous businessman possessing seven or eight cars himself. One of the clerks in the Indian Embassy was the daughter of a Minister of Education in one of the preceding Governments. As they say, even walls have ears in Prague, and if you talked ill of the Communists even in your private room, the 'red' Police would suddenly come down on you the next morning. But, I must admit, I was allowed to talk quite freely in Czechoslovakia and my public lecture in Prague, despite the summer vacations, was very well attended. I discussed Capitalism, Communism and Gandhism without any fear or favour and even the officers of the Government showed great interest in Indian culture, particularly Gandhian ideals.

Whatever we might say against the Communists, we have to admit one fact, namely, that they are very systematic and thorough in their work and administration. As soon as they capture power, their set programme is immediately launched on all fronts. They are specially careful in overhauling the entire educational system, because education of the young is the foundation of national culture. After the Gottwald regime, the children of Czechoslovakia 'receive a *unified* education' in state schools and technical institutions. All the educational institutions are run directly by the State: there is no room for private schools. The curriculum is uniform, the textbooks are prescribed by the Education Department of the Government. No variations of any sort are permitted. The Education Ministry was kind enough to

give me all information without any hesitation. I could see how even old textbooks on Mathematics and Science were being 'censored' by the Ministry officials with dark, black ink. It was evident that the Communist Government did not want to take any risks. Moreover, it believed in instilling Communism in the minds of children at every step. I was informed that about 8,000 young students had been thrown out of the schools and colleges because they were supposed to belong to the '*bourgeois*' class and, therefore, unfit for receiving educational facilities at the hands of the People's Government. About 100 professors had been 'chucked off' for the same reason. 'Political education', which is another polite phrase for 'Marxism' in all these red States, has been made compulsory for all students, and some elderly professors narrated how even they were being compelled to attend such classes where their own students teach them what Communism is. Besides students and teachers, all the writers, artists, and members of different professions, are also required to study Marxism without undue delay. The educational institutions are full of various charts and placards propagating 'red' ideology amongst young boys and girls.

The Economic policy of the Gottwald Government was being enthusiastically implemented in the form of a Five-Year Plan which was displayed in the form of prominent posters at almost every street corner. The aim of the Plan was 'to raise the standard of living of all sections of the working population'. The means to achieve this objective lay in 'raising the productivity of labour'. The consequences of the Plan will be 'the

restriction of remaining capitalist elements and their elimination from all sectors of the national economy'. The Plan made it clear to all the people that 'to accept American loans means, in effect, to become a vassal of American capital, and of American capitalists'. Therefore, the only path open to them was 'to finance the expansion of our economy with our own labour, our own financial resources, that is, our own savings, and sacrifices'.

As regards the organization of labour, on May 16th, 1946, the United Trade Union Organization Act was issued under which the Czechoslovak working people were to have one unified Trade Union without any rivals. The function of this Organization was to 'guide its members in such a way as to enable them best to fulfil their tasks in the people's democracy and to ensure to workers a share in the construction and management of cultural and social facilities.' It was claimed that 75 per cent of all employed persons in the country were associated in the Unified Trade Union movement. The Government claims to have wiped out the curse of unemployment and abolished the sight of beggars or tramps. I was given to understand that, in the beginning, the workers in industry were very enthusiastic about the new Communist regime because they received a number of facilities in the factories in addition to a certain share in profits and the management. But, gradually, a brake had naturally to be applied to their unlimited demands, because the new Government had to lower the costs of production in order to be able to compete in international markets. At present, the Secretary-General of the Unified Trade

Union movement is also the Minister for Labour, so that he, as the leader of the Trade Union, would forward no proposals to the Government for acceptance about the urgent need of which he himself was not fully convinced. According to the Act, no other trade unions, except the Unified one, are permitted to be established in the country. In other words, the Government has a monopoly of Trade Union Organization, and no question of competition in labour leadership can arise. It is illegal in Czechoslovakia to go on strike; any indiscipline is rigorously dealt with by the police and the military. Despite all these strict provisions in the industrial organization of the country, it is significant to know that the volume of production in the nationalized industries is slowly going down. The cost of production has a tendency to go up, and thus disturb and dislocate the Government plans of international trade. This feature of internal economy is the source of greatest headache to the Gottwald Government. Recently a number of managers of the State factories were turned out as inefficient and corrupt, and the Government had adopted a very stiff attitude towards those persons who were not supposed to be wholeheartedly siding with the Communist regime. Communism, in this way, ultimately leads to totalitarianism and regimentation of the masses in order to survive.

The profit-motive in industry is replaced by the fear-complex and individual freedom or initiative evaporates into thin air. It is difficult to answer the question whether the ordinary people in Czechoslovakia are satisfied with the existing Government, because nobody is prepared to



speak out his mind to anybody else for fear of being persecuted and harassed. So the Communist regime has turned into a huge steam-roller which heartlessly crushes down all elements of opposition.

The above is a peep behind the Iron Curtain. Although we could not pierce the Curtain, we had the real satisfaction of witnessing Communism in action in this land of the Czechs. I have no love for the capitalistic system; it is a monstrous economic organization in which there is respect for money and not for man. But, I frankly admit that the Communist system based on violence and extreme regimentation is not worthy of respect and admiration. Between these two 'isms', Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of decentralization and bread-labour offers the most satisfactory solution of our present-day economic ills.

## XXII

### A TRIP TO VIENNA

AUSTRIA which was once a huge Empire in Europe is now a small country divided into four Zones, the Russian, American, British and French. The Russian Zone has been so carved out that no tourist can enter or go out of Austria without crossing it. Hence the Russians are able to keep a close watch on visitors to Austria through very strict visa regulations. Fortunately for us, the necessary visas could be obtained without much difficulty. Moreover, we reached Vienna from Prague by air and had no occasion to pass through the Russian Zone by train.

Vienna, the capital of Austria, is also divided into four sectors belonging to the Big Four powers, as in Berlin. Going to the Russian Zone, specially at night, may mean any amount of trouble. But there are no strict traffic regulations in passing from one Zone to another. Vienna is not a heap of ruins like Berlin. Except a few big buildings of the city, the rest have been spared from indiscriminate bombing during the last War. The Austrian Capital is a beautiful city indeed. The streets are broad and lined with green trees on both sides. The buildings possess rare architectural splendour. Besides the massive structures of the Opera, the Charles Cathedral, the University of Vienna, and the Museum of Fine Arts, we were much impressed by the splendid Schonbrunn Palace with its unique gardens and lawns. This Palace of the old Austrian Kings contains rich treasures of Oriental art, specially Chinese and Indian paintings.

We were shown the different houses in Vienna where the celebrated composer Beethoven lived from time to time. It was interesting to know that Beethoven was forced by his neighbours to move from place to place because he was deaf and would constantly be a real nuisance to the adjoining families by playing very loudly on the piano and other musical instruments. It was a very pleasant afternoon when we took a tour of the Vienna Woods and went up the top of the hill. This view from the top, with the 'Blue Danube' figuring prominently in the colourful landscape, was unforgettable. In the Russian Zone, the well-known Amusement Park with its giant wheel was a very special attraction.

America is trying to help Austria financially in order to stem the tide of Communism. But, as usual, the Austrians are not pleased with the Americans because they honestly and, perhaps, rightly feel that through the Marshall Aid, the Americans are endeavouring to kill the big industries of Austria and make the country a safe market for their own goods. The Americans are not re-starting some of the important factories under one pretext or another and American goods, especially automobiles, are flooding the Austrian market. The people are, therefore, eager to rebuild their own country as an independent State without the control and interference of the big Powers. Temperamentally, the Austrians are not prone to Communism. But if the present state of affairs continues and the Americans are not able to win the confidence of the people, it will be no wonder if Austria also becomes a hot-bed of 'red' activities.

Before leaving for Vienna with a few friends of the Indian Embassy in Prague, we had not informed anybody in advance; nor had we any intention of fixing public programmes in the city. We wanted to visit Vienna almost unnoticed. But as soon as people in the city saw us and knew from the Manager of our Hotel that we came from India and the very town of Mahatma Gandhi, we were literally mobbed by the press and the photographers. Wherever we went in the city, a crowd would spontaneously follow us and the cameramen 'shoot' us in front of different buildings. Even a News-reel was prepared during our stay and was shown in the picture-houses of the city. Several editors of newspapers came to our Hotel for special interviews on Indian affairs, particularly on the relations between the two new Dominions. Many questions were put to me regarding the extent to which Free India had been following the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi.

The economic condition of the people in Austria was deplorable; there was considerable unemployment owing to the destruction or closing down of factories. Since the purchasing power of the masses was so low, the fancy goods sent by Uncle Sam could not be sold quickly; they were only appreciated by the public in the 'show-windows' of different shops in some of the main streets. But the people appeared to be determined to build up their country once again through unity and hard toil.

## XXIII

### ON WAY TO ROME: THE ETERNAL CITY

AFTER Vienna, the next important centre of our activities was to be Rome where the Embassy of India had already been able to fix a few public engagements for us. But on our way to Rome, I was eager to touch several other famous places like the cities of Venice, Florence and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. And so we decided to leave Vienna by train, although the Russian Zone had to be crossed on the way to Italy. Fortunately, nothing unusual happened during the train journey, and we reached Venice, the romantic canal city of 'gondolas' reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. San Marco Plaza, the heart of this beautiful city, is the chief attraction for foreign visitors because, besides the architectural splendour of the buildings of San Marco's Basilica, the Tower and Ducale Palace, the quadrangle of shops gives a glimpse of the exquisite leather, glass, enamel and mosaic arts of Italy. Venice, with its narrow streets, numerous man-made canals, workshops of fine handicrafts and places of historical interest, is surely worth a visit. It is by no means a clean city and the stagnant water of the canals stinks into your nostrils. But Venice has a 'flavour' of its own which cannot be easily forgotten. While passing through the Grand Canal, we saw the house where the famous English poet Robert Browning lived, and where Mrs Browning died; Lord Byron's attraction for this city was also evident from an

artistic building where he had stayed for several years. We spent one afternoon in going out into the shallow Adriatic Sea and visiting the Islands of Murano and Burano which are the centres of glass and lace industries.

Florence, the city of unique art galleries, was our next stop. It is the city of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Galileo; the cradle of the Renaissance and, therefore, rightly called the Athens of the West. As we wander through the streets, the glorious past is vividly brought before our minds. The fortress-like appearance of the Palazzo Vecchio recalls the frequent popular risings and the bitter fightings, the mighty dome of the Cathedral bears record of Brunelleschi and re-echoes with the eloquence of Savonarola, the House of Dante reminds us of the poetic flights of the *Divine Comedy*, and the different Squares and Art Galleries thrill us with the masterpieces of Michael Angelo's sculpture and Raphael's most famous works in painting. The Medici Chapel, with its superb mosaic work, reminds us of the Italian artists who were invited by Shah Jahan from Florence to give touches of magical mosaic art to the wonderful tomb of his beloved wife, the Taj Mahal. The Pitti and Uffizi Galleries constitute, perhaps, the finest collection of Italian Paintings in their original canvas. The Panorama of this handsome city from Piazzale Michael Angelo, with the prominent Dome of Santa Maria Cathedral, Giotto's Tower, Baptistry of St. John and St. Michele's Church, is a unique experience especially at night.

Although Pisa was a bit out of the way *en route* to Rome, I thought it worthwhile to spend a day more in visiting one of the wonders of the world, the Leaning

Tower. With its eight storeyed structure, the Tower is about 150 ft. high leaning 14 ft. from its foundation. It was not constructed by any one particular engineer for showing his skill. When it was being raised as a tower attached to the adjoining Cathedral several centuries ago, the first three storeys leaned on one side owing to some defect in the foundation which was only about six feet deep. The engineers did not know what to do, and so they gave up the attempt as a hopeless task. After about a century of unfinished work, another engineer succeeded in raising a few storeys more on those weak and leaning foundations. He could not carry on further. Ultimately, after a break of another hundred years, one skilful engineer put up the last three storeys with a huge bell at the top. Since then, there have been no further attempts and the Leaning Tower which was expected by the people to tumble down any moment has been standing in this position during the last five hundred years. Pisa is a small town which was considerably bombed during the last War. But, whether intentionally or by mere accident, the Pisa Tower survived the global holocaust to testify to the extraordinary engineering skill of man.

‘All roads lead to Rome’, and so, despite our side-trip to Pisa, there was no difficulty in catching a fast train to the Eternal City and reach there within a few hours. It is true that ‘Rome was not built in a day’, and the history of this illustrious Capital goes back to several centuries before Christ. Twenty-first April 753 B.C. is regarded as the foundation-day of Rome, and since that time, this ancient city has been witnessing the

rise and fall of many a kingdom, Empire and civilization. In this Eternal City, the ancient and the modern art, sculpture and history lie side by side in a curious atmosphere of harmony which is not found in any other great city of the world. The modern capital has no lack of objects attractive to the eyes of a visitor: majestic basilicas, solemn churches, stately palaces, and the noblest monuments of art. But it is the past that attracts us most; the Rome of the past twenty-six centuries rises before our minds like a phantom of glory and tears. While walking through the streets of modern Rome, we encounter everywhere some wreck of the past, a mouldering pile, a ruined arch, a broken pillar, a mutilated statue. Into these stones have passed all the tempests of the human spirit, with periods of sublime heights and abject decay.

Among the ancient monuments that were of special interest to us were the Trajan Forum with the complex aggregation of edifices called the Trajan Markets, the Forum of Cæsar with several relics of Pillars and Arches, the Colosseum with the Emperor's seat from where he must have witnessed many gladiators torn to pieces by hungry lions, the Roman Forum with the Arch of Constantine and the Temples of Venus and Augustus, and the Statue of Marcus Aurelius, the celebrated Emperor-Philosopher of Rome. The Pantheon is probably the most perfect of all classical monuments in the Capital. Its solemn cupola with the aperture showing the sky which seems to descend into the temple, gives us a unique impression of sublime grandeur. As examples of Renaissance Art, the St. Peter's and St. Paul's Churches



are unrivalled in their architectural beauty and mosaic paintings. We also got down the Catacombs and saw the original tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul buried beneath the splendour of the Roman Empire. These Catacombs are the underground Christian cemeteries extending to several hundred miles where are buried thousands of known and unknown 'martyrs' with their bones scattered all over the vast area. The Monument of Victor Emmanuel II stands out prominently in the heart of the City with the famous Mussolini's Balcony in front of the Piazza Venezia. Garibaldi's tall statue on the Hill is also one of the special attractions in Rome. We had the opportunity of seeing two Opera performances in the romantic setting of the Caracalla which was an ancient building for Hot Baths. Visits to the two-thousand years old relics of Ostia and the Terrace Water-Gardens of Tivoli were additional sources of delight.

During our ten days' stay in the Italian Capital, we were advised to run down to Naples for a day or two and visit the Ruins of Pompeii. We were lucky in following this advice because besides seeing the best Museum of ancient Roman relics in Naples, we could get a very good idea of the Pompeii excavations. Pompeii was a Roman town which was suddenly buried under an enormous cloud and rain of ashes gushing out of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. The work of excavations was undertaken as late as the first half of the nineteenth century. These excavations have brought to light the ways of ancient Roman life, the structure and internal arrangements of houses, shops, amphitheatres, temples, forums or market-places, baths and gardens. The colourful mural paintings about

2,500 years old in one of the houses were of very great attraction to us because we could compare them with our own fresco paintings of Ajanta.

Despite extremely warm weather, we ventured to climb up the top of Vesuvius and see the vast crater with a few points down below from which fumes were coming out. The last eruption was in 1945 and, therefore, the lava lying on all sides of the crater was quite fresh comparatively. The same evening, we left in a boat for the Capri Island which is world-famous for its 'blue grotto'. The rays of the sun shining in this Cave through the blue waters of the sea present a marvellous scene indeed.

## XXIV

### MUSSOLINI'S DREAM OF AN EMPIRE

WITH HIS Capital in Rome which had been the seat of one of the biggest Empires in human history, it was not unnatural for a dictator like Mussolini to dream of another great Empire under his suzerainty. On the walls of one of the old churches in Rome, we were shown several maps which were carved out by the Duce, depicting the growth of the Roman Empire from time to time; the last map showed the Plan of Mussolini's own Empire which was bigger and more ambitious even than the Roman Empire. After the downfall of Mussolini, the new Catholic Government had scratched out this last map, although part of it still remains to give a hazy idea of Mussolini's dream. I was amused to see these maps because it gave me some indication of the numerous ways in which dictators try to keep up the enthusiasm of their admirers. The failure of Mussolini and his dreams was not only the failure of dictatorships but also the failure of the Italian people.

Of course the Italians are highly artistic, specially in the domain of painting. You could hardly come across a house in Italy without large paintings hanging on the walls. In sculpture too, Rome possesses the finest type of fountains, with a wealth of variety and beauty that is unsurpassed. But the people of Italy are very unsystematic and indisciplined in their daily life. There is no queue system. Their laziness can be judged from the fact that all the shops and offices close between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

After lunch, people regularly sleep for a few hours during the day before reopening their shops after 4 O'clock. The Italian people are bad businessmen into the bargain; they are not smart and tactful salesmen although they do not hesitate to fleece the foreign tourists as much as they can. Their standard of honesty in public life is very low; bribery, corruption and black-marketing are the rule of the day. The Italian cities, including Rome, are comparatively unclean because there is a poor sense of cleanliness among the people. It is a queer sociological phenomenon that the keener the sense of art among the people the lower is their standard of efficiency and discipline. The Americans and the British people are very systematic, disciplined and efficient, but their sense of art, specially of the Americans, is miserably low. Whereas the French and the Italians are endowed with an exquisite sense of art while their efficiency and sense of public duty and cleanliness are very weak.

The educational standards of the Italians are by no means of a high order. There are 22 Universities in Italy, but none of them is residential. The Doctor's degree is like the graduate degree of other countries: thus, in Italy, all graduates are Doctors. It is also very curious that the Montessori system of child education is not widely adopted in Italy. The State runs hardly any schools of that type; there are only a few private institutions which follow the Montessori method. This is only one more proof of the common experience that a Prophet is not honoured in his own land. It was admitted by one of the senior educational officers of the Italian Ministry of Education that Indian children are more

intelligent than Italian children; what an Indian child of four can grasp, an Italian child of six cannot. So far, there is no widespread arrangement for adult education in Italy; however, night schools are being gradually organized by the Government. As in India, there is great rush in the High Schools and Universities especially after the War. The new Catholic Government has ordered that History only upto the year 1919 should be taught in schools; the period of Mussolini's rise is not to be touched at all.

The economic condition of the Italians is pitiful. There is mass unemployment partly owing to industrial depression after the War and partly due to the general lethargy of the people. The Italians are incapable of putting their shoulders to the wheel. Uncle Sam is pouring Marshall Aid into Italy because the danger of Communism in this land of Mussolini is very real. The Communist Party is still the strongest single party in Italy and it missed power at the last elections by a narrow margin. The existing Catholic Government under the influence of the Pope is not popular with the masses because it has not been able to solve the pressing economic problems of the land.

Although the present regime tries to denounce and belittle everything connected with the name of Mussolini, it is actively encouraging the old Fascist elements in order to halt the march of Communism in Italy. Mussolini's Offices and the Balcony are being used for International Conferences. But most of the other buildings constructed by the Duce like the elegant Commerce building, the Fascist Training Centre, and the grand Church,

are lying unused and unrepaired. Although the name of the Italian Dictator is denounced, his ideology of Fascism seems to be prospering day by day. This is not only a political but a moral and spiritual catastrophe of the highest order.

## XXV

### WE MEET THE POPE

THROUGHOUT OUR tour we had come across numerous Roman Catholic organizations and churches. In Rome itself, we had the opportunity of visiting several humanitarian institutions run by Roman Catholic nuns in which war-disabled children were brought up and educated. St. Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican City with its huge artistic dome designed by the celebrated sculptor Michael Angelo, and St. Paul's Cathedral of Rome with its exquisite mosaic wall paintings had impressed us greatly. We had also been to the Church of the Holy Cross in Rome where people go up the Holy Steps on their knees before a box which is supposed to contain pieces of the Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified, as also a nail and a few thorns which were thrust into Christ's body.

We were naturally anxious to get a chance to meet the Pope who is the Head of the world organization of the Roman Catholic faith. The Embassy of India in Rome was good enough to arrange for our interview with His Holiness on the 1st September. Ordinarily, the Pope lives in his Castle in the Vatican City which is a part of Rome but which is an independent State outside the scope of the Italian Government. But during summer he moves out to 'Castle Gandolfo' which is about forty miles away from Rome. We, therefore, motored to this summer 'Castle' of the Pope with a few friends of the Indian Embassy who had never been there.

At the gate of the 'Castle Gandolfo' stood the Policemen of the Pope in their characteristic and colourful costume. They escorted us to a waiting room where other visitors also sat in silence. The Castle was a fine and rich work of Roman art befitting kings. The time given to us for interview was 10-30 a.m., although we had to wait till 11-30 a.m. I do not know whether there was anything unusual that day, or unpunctuality was a matter of routine with the Pope's administration. Anyway, we were happy to be presented to His Holiness who is also renowned as a scholar. The present Pope's name is Pius XII and he has an impressive personality.

"We are on a tour of the world, contacting people and institutions interested in India and Mahatma Gandhi," I said, introducing ourselves to the Pope. "We had the privilege of coming in close contact with Gandhiji, and after his sudden passing away from our midst, we are trying in all humility to give whatever information we possess to all those who are eager to know about his life and work."

"Yes, I myself have a great regard for Gandhi's ideals and work," said the Pope. "I had the opportunity of expressing my thoughts about him only some weeks ago when your Indian Minister presented his credentials to me."

"We had read about your speech in the papers," I said.

Mrs Agarwal then presented to the Pope a small ivory statue of Gandhiji together with a copy of the *Bhagawad Gita*. She also gave a small packet containing a few



so much importance to ceremonies, rituals and worship of the Cross, the Madonna and the Child. I was under the impression that the Hindus are the most idolatrous people in the world. But I think the Roman Catholics are as much given to idolatry, if not more, as the Hindus.

XXVI  
ATHENS:  
THE CITY OF SOCRATES

SEVERAL friends had advised me not to visit Greece because of the political and military situation prevailing in that country. As is well known, Greece has been the arena of guerrilla warfare during the last few years; the guerrillas come into Greece from the neighbouring Russian satellites, destroy villages and loot property in order to create chaos, and on being chased by the Greek Army, slip back again into countries like Bulgaria and Albania. The Greek Army cannot pursue these guerrilla bands into these territories for obvious political reasons. Greece is therefore almost bleeding to death. It is true that America is spending dollars very liberally in Greece both in the form of Marshall Aid as well as special Defence expenditure. But all this money is being consumed either on warfare or on the rehabilitation and relief of several hundred thousand refugees from those parts of the country where the guerrillas are most active. The main technique of the Communists is to create chaos, dissatisfaction, suffering and poverty among the people whom they ultimately mean to conquer. The situation in Greece, therefore, is indeed far from satisfactory. Only a few weeks before my arrival in Athens, it was not safe to live in that city. Guerrillas were active in areas quite near Athens. But, thanks to Providence, Athens was all quiet at the time of our landing and continued to be so till the time of our departure.

I was very keen on visiting Athens because of its ancient cultural traditions. Rome and Athens had been the two most important centres of European culture for several centuries. It was, therefore, quite natural that I should have longed to be in Athens after a visit to Rome. The Government of India has no Embassy in Greece. But the Indian Embassy in Rome was good enough to request the British Embassy in Athens to render us the necessary help during our visit. On reaching Athens, we contacted both the Travel Agencies, the Cooks and the American Express. But it was a job to secure hotel accommodation. Tourists who travel for pleasure do not care to visit Greece these days, and so the Travel Agencies organize no tours and maintain only skeleton offices. The British Embassy was also quite helpless in this matter. Most of the big hotels have been occupied by American and British military forces and other high officials. And so we proved to be, more or less, unwanted visitors in this ancient city of Socrates. After great difficulty, we did succeed in securing tolerable board and lodging in a small and out of the way hotel and thus managed to pass a few days in the city.

I had decided to be in Athens not because it was the capital of Greece but because it was the city of good old Socrates whom I have always loved and admired. As a student, I had the opportunity of studying *The Trial and Death of Socrates* as a part of my Intermediate Examination course, and it was one of my cherished desires to see with my own eyes the Prison where Socrates had drunk the hemlock smilingly with his own hands, saying: "Now the time has come for us to depart, for me to die and

for you to live; whether life or death be better is known only to God!" Socrates was 'the great cross-examiner', who tried his best to 'reconstruct human opinion on reasoned truth', and who ceaselessly emphasized the importance of moral values in his well-known dictum: 'Virtue is knowledge; vice is ignorance.' Behind that grotesque ugliness, flat nose, prominent eyes and shabby dress lived a mighty spirit that 'did not care a straw for death' and lived in a state of eternal tranquillity. On my arrival in Athens, I immediately made enquiries about Socrates's Prison, but I received the shock of my life when everybody including the Travel Agencies professed ignorance about any such place. Several officers of the British Embassy had not heard of the Prison either. I was sorely disappointed. At last, one of the 'guides' gave us a faint idea of its location and, with the help of some other friends, I did succeed in reaching the spot where this old Prison of Socrates still stands at the foot of a hill in the midst of trees. There is no sign of Governmental care to preserve this ancient monument and the public does not express any concern about it. What a pity, indeed!

Greece, which was once a land of glorious culture and civilization, is now a land of tears, suffering from economic poverty, cultural degradation, educational eclipse, and political chaos. When I first landed in Athens and beheld the celebrated Acropolis on the Attica hill, I remembered Byron's lines written on first seeing those 'once glorious islands'—

"Eternal summer gilds them yet,  
But all, except their sun, is set."

I also remembered how Greece had to face the problem of mass migration of refugees as we had to experience recently in India. After the catastrophe of Asia Minor in 1922, about one million and a half Greek refugees from Turkey equalling one-fourth of the total population had to be taken over by their mother-land. It was, indeed, a tremendous problem for this small country to face. In consequence, its internal economy was considerably dislocated and even today the country has not wholly recovered from it.

Relics of ancient Athens which we were able to visit during our short stay were: the Acropolis with the massive Parthenon temple of the fifth century B.C.; the Olympium, consecrated to Zeus the supreme god of the ancient Greeks; Hadrian's Arch; the Athens Stadium where the first World Olympic Games took place in 1896 and which can accommodate about 50,000 persons; the Theseum, which is one of the best preserved of ancient Greek temples; the Greek Agora or market place, recently excavated by the American Archaeological Mission, in which several important buildings referred to by old Greek authors have been identified; the Temple of Apollo and the Stoa of Zeus, a favourite haunt of Socrates and his disciples; the Tower of the Winds which is an octagonal building of marble, having a bas relief on each side symbolizing the wind blowing from that quarter; and lastly the Arcopagus where sat the Supreme Court of Justice in ancient Greece. I was very anxious to see the relics of the Academy of Plato and Aristotle. But, like the Prison of Socrates, this place too was very little known in Athens of today. One of the friends in the

British Embassy did manage to take us to an old olive tree surrounded by an iron fencing with no plate of description or even name. This was the tree under which Plato is supposed to have sat with his disciples discussing problems of deep philosophy and morals. I called a few urchins playing near this olive tree and asked them whether they knew anything about the Academy of Plato. They knew nothing about it. When I asked them about the old tree, one of them quietly replied: "Why, this is just an old olive tree!" So this is all that is left of Plato's memory in his own ancient land.

We were, however, fortunate, in being able to witness three ancient Greek plays of Sophocles which were staged in one of the old Amphitheatres of Athens in their proper setting reminiscent of the third and fourth centuries B.C. I had studied the technique of the ancient Greek Drama in the M. A. course in English Literature. It was a treat to see now with my own eyes the significant part played by the Chorus and the Furies in these ancient dramas. The old dresses and the Greek stage amid the relics of the ancient Amphitheatre helped to revive, though only for a few hours, the ancient glory of Greece. The opening ceremony of this Festival of Plays took place on the very day we reached Athens. And so we were very lucky in attending it because the King, the Queen and all the important official and non-official personalities of the city were present on this historic occasion.

Before we left Athens for Istanbul by one of the B. O. A. C. Airliners, we had a look at the buildings of the University, the Parliament, and the Academy. It

was also interesting to see an Exhibition of the Greek Army's fight against the Communist Guerrillas arranged in the Zaption building in the National Gardens. The Greeks are today engaged in a struggle of life and death, and as our plane took off from the airfield, we wished good luck to this 'once glorious' land of Socrates.

## XXVII

### KAMAL PASHA'S TURKEY

WHILE DRIVING from the Airport to the Istanbul city in the Indian Embassy's car, my wife remembered the name of Halida Hanum Edib, a distinguished Turkish lady who had visited India about twelve years ago and had been to Wardha for seeing Gandhiji. Strangely enough, the first appointment fixed by the Embassy of India for us was an interview with Halida Hanum. It was just a coincidence, and when the friends of the Indian Embassy knew about it they also felt amused. The great lady who has been doing very good work in Turkey among women and had also done considerable writing to spread Gandhiji's ideals in Kamal Pasha's land, was happy to meet us and remembered vividly her visit to Wardha and the Bajaj Guest House many years ago. As I happened to be indisposed it was my wife who discussed with her for a fairly long time the present social, educational, economic and political conditions in Turkey. Madam Edib also wanted to know about the present situation in Free India. She was very happy to read the pamphlets about the Sarvodaya Samaj and lost no time in writing about its aims and objectives in the Turkish Press. Her articles aroused great interest among the people in Istanbul and the Press was almost jubilant over our visit to Turkey.

As a matter of fact I had never expected any enthusiasm in Turkey about India and Gandhi, firstly, because the people of Turkey do not like to be included in



Asia, they rather prefer to be called Europeans, and, secondly, they are a Muslim State more interested in the Islamic countries than in India. But I was mistaken. As soon as the people in Istanbul read in the papers that some persons connected with Mahatma Gandhi were reaching their city, they were very enthusiastic about seeing us and learning details about Gandhiji's life and death. The editors of different papers sought interviews with us and published them prominently on front pages. The result was that we found it very difficult to move about on foot in the streets of Istanbul. As soon as they spied our Indian dress they would gather around us with curiosity and ask many questions about Gandhiji. They wanted to show us their educational institutions and other cultural centres. But unfortunately I was taken seriously ill and had to be in bed for several days.

Kamal Atatürk is yet a household name in Turkey; a word of praise for him would elicit a Turk's affection and sympathy as perhaps nothing else could. Kamal ruled Turkey with an iron hand, but with a loving heart. He turned a decadent country into a modern, progressive 'European' nation. Now every Turkish man or woman wears the European dress, except perhaps in the remote interior; the indigenous Muslim dress is illegal, specially the *Fez* cap. But love of the old and indigenous customs and manners seem to be so deeply ingrained in the people that a slight slackening of rules would, I am sure, revive the ancient Turkish dress in Kamal Pasha's land. Even today, the old ladies in Istanbul were found to tie a scarf round their head in order to

have a feeling of covering it as they used to do as part of the old Muslim dress. Moreover, our Indian dress, *sherwani* and *sari*, was much appreciated in Turkey which clearly showed their leanings. The language of the country remains Turkish, although it is written and printed in the Roman characters. All the technical terminology for the highest educational courses has been coined in their own language. Turkey has some of the finest daily newspapers in its own language. French rather than English is popular among the intelligentsia. In Istanbul I found some important old mosques being used as Government offices and museums. Of all the Muslim countries free from Communist regimes, this could happen in Kamal Atatürk's land alone. There is no religious fanaticism or bigotry in Turkey. Even politically, the Turkish leaders and the Press refuse to participate in the foreign propaganda of the Pakistani diplomats.

Turkey is directly exposed to the 'red' danger, because of its geographical position. Russia is eager to capture Bosphorus to get an entry into the Mediterranean Sea. That is why both sides of Bosphorus have been heavily fortified against a possible Russian attack in the event of a third World War. We took an evening drive along the beautiful panorama of Bosphorus. It not only divides Asia from Europe but bids fair to become a bone of contention between the two worlds, one dominated by America and the other by the U.S.S.R. Turkey has been receiving substantial financial assistance from the United States in the form of both Marshall Aid and Defence expenditure. The American Trade Mission, although a

non-political body, virtually controls the political trends in Kamal's land as well, for, whoever pays the piper calls the tune. Every Turk today is deeply concerned over the possibility of a third world war breaking over his country. But he seems to be determined to fight to death for defending the liberty of his land. We had the opportunity of meeting President Bayar, who was then, the leader of the Opposition in the Turkish Parliament. He impressed us with his sound common sense and breadth of political outlook. He might have any differences with the other political parties. But, so far as the defence of Turkey is concerned, his party is at one with all the elements of the Turkish national life.

Istanbul or the old Constantinople is a romantic mixture of the old and the new, of the East and the West, of the Christian and Muslim traditions. The old mosques with their towering Minars present a picturesque appearance from the air. The Suleiman Mosque is one of the most beautiful buildings in the City. The Palace, which is now the President's residence is a fine piece of architecture. The streets with old stone pavements remind the visitor of the ancient glories of Constantinople. The covered market of the city with small shops of all varieties of goods is a special attraction for the tourists. The University buildings with the tall tower in the middle have been a seat of learning of repute and Kamal Ataturk gave them the touch of modernity. As the meeting ground of the East and the West or of Asia and Europe, Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey, has a great future, provided this land of Kamal Pasha is able to maintain strict neutrality between the

'two worlds'. But this appears to be almost an impossible task in the existing circumstances of a 'cold war' that threatens to grow red-hot under the formidable shadows of the atom and the hydrogen bombs.

## XXVIII

### IN PAKISTAN'S CAPITAL

AFTER Turkey, we had plans to visit Syria, the new Jewish State of Israel, Iraq and, if possible, Persia before going to Pakistan *en route* to India. But my health compelled me to cancel this tour of the Muslim countries much against my will. Therefore, we had to proceed from Istanbul direct to Karachi by one of the Pan American flights, only touching Damascus and Basra on the way. I had never been to Karachi before. And so when our plane was about to land at the Karachi Airport we felt that we were, after a strenuous world tour, back on the Indian soil. We found it difficult to imagine that Karachi which was an integral part of India two years before had become a foreign city for us. We were soon disillusioned.

The Indian High Commissioner's staff car took us to a hotel. When we asked about the rates and the arrangements for vegetarian meals in the hotel, we found them very unsatisfactory. "We have not come across such rules in any of the hotels throughout our tour," I said. "Sir, we do not know about other countries, but this is a Pakistani hotel and we have our own rules," came the prompt and sharp reply. When the taxi-driver on another occasion was asked as to why his rates were so high, his cut-and-dried answer was: "These are Pakistani taxis, Sir." When a friend asked for a meal of the 'Hindustani style' as against the 'European style' in a Karachi restaurant, the waiter turned round and

remarked: "This is a Pakistani restaurant; here you can get only Pakistani dishes." People did not seem to be prepared to hear the name of India or Gandhi. I was sorry to learn that only a few weeks back the Indian High Commissioner was not allowed to place a wreath on a statue of Gandhiji in Karachi city. We went round the city mostly in the High Commissioner's car. But wherever the car stopped and people saw that it was Indian Diplomatic car they almost invariably gathered round it and looked at us with inimical eyes sometimes shouting anti-Indian slogans. Even the Muslim driver of the Indian High Commissioner was occasionally threatened by the street urchins. "You are a Muslim, and yet you serve a Hindu!" These shouts could also be heard in front of the Indian High Commissioner's Office and residence when boys desecrated the Muslim Guard standing at the gate of the Indian Diplomatic buildings. To be frank, we were not at all prepared for this 'tragic' experience after a tour of so many countries of the East and the West where India and Gandhi were held in the highest esteem. It was hoped that partition of India would set at rest the hostile attitude of the Muslims. But a few days' stay in Karachi belied any such hope; on the contrary, matters seemed to be going from bad to worse.

The recent Indo-Pakistan Pact signed at New Delhi by the two Prime Ministers has, however, ushered in a new era in this sub-continent. I earnestly hope that the Pact would prove to be of lasting value in fostering friendly relations between India and Pakistan.

The economic condition of the people in Pakistan was not satisfactory. Karachi, which was, perhaps, the cleanest city in undivided India, is now full of dirt and filth, and the dress of the man-in-the-street is almost torn and tattered. But we in India are apt to under-rate the economic strength of Pakistan as compared with our own. I met the Indian Trade Commissioner in Karachi and he also admitted that the economic over-all picture of Pakistan was much better than that of India. Their foreign trade has a favourable balance; Pakistan has become the leader of food supplies to the Mid-Eastern Muslim countries like Persia, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. We were in Karachi on the day the Pakistan Cabinet decided not to devalue the Pakistani rupee. The Cabinet sat for full twelve hours seriously discussing all the pros and cons of the problem. Ultimately, they decided against devaluation. I do not think the India Government devoted so much attention to this important problem and, perhaps, hastily announced their decision to devalue the Indian rupee along with the British pound. What the ultimate result will be, it is difficult to say definitely at this stage. But we must not judge Pakistan in haste so that we might not have to repent at leisure.

We visited Mr Jinnah's tomb on the outskirts of Karachi. The Pakistan Government is preparing plans to build a marble memorial in due course. But the soldier attending on the tomb seemed to be quite dissatisfied with the slow progress of the work of construction. As I stood beside this uncovered tomb with a few flowers spread on it, I wondered how remarkably

Mr Jinnah had succeeded in carving the biggest Muslim State out of India. The brain that created Pakistan out of almost nothing and which must have had many further plans for the future of this new State now lies buried beneath a heap of earth in eternal silence.



## XXIX

### BACK TO DELHI

WE were so fed up with the unhelpful atmosphere in Karachi that we arranged to leave Pakistan's Capital earlier than the scheduled date. Since we had sterling currency with us, we were in no mood to lose more money owing to the non-devaluation of Pakistani rupee. Fortunately two seats were available on a plane of the Indian National Airways and we took leave of the High Commissioner for India to start for Delhi. After a fairly pleasant journey, we reached the Willingdon Airport in the evening. The landing was very bad indeed; but nothing untoward happened and we, after all, set foot on the soil of India after a long and arduous tour of about five months and a half covering approximately forty thousand miles.

During all these months we had come in contact with thousands of men and women of different countries who were deeply interested in India and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. They all looked to India for moral and spiritual guidance. Weary of wars and ideological conflicts, they earnestly believed that Gandhi's land could give them peace and happiness of a lasting nature. They did not expect to learn anything from India in regard to modern industrialization and the science of military defence; they had enough of all these during the last few decades. What they hungered for was a quest after the Eternal values of life, and they had faith in the capacity of India to help them in realizing these spiritual values

without which life ceases to have any real meaning and significance. I came across several learned professors in America and on the Continent who refused to believe that in India too, many people were materialistic even like them. It was very hard for them to imagine that Gandhi's land could produce persons who were not deeply religious and spiritual. They longed to be in India before they ended their earthly existence; it was their long-cherished hope and dream. Their bodies were in Europe, but their soul was in India. But I know too that there are many people in India whose bodies are in this country but whose souls are in Europe or America.

I had also been able to see hundreds of educational and philanthropic institutions in the different countries I visited. They provided me with many new ideas about improving our own institutions in India. But I was convinced, more than ever, that a country had to develop her institutions in accordance with her own indigenous culture and genius which may be called the 'Soul' of a nation. Of course, we must not be blind to the good points of others; a policy of isolationism would be surely suicidal to a country. But, in order to achieve lasting and organic growth and evolution, it is absolutely essential to have the roots deep in our own soil. Indian educationists have, therefore, to rediscover the Soul of India in overhauling the entire educational system from the pre-basic to the University stage. Unless this is done with faith and determination, I am sure, India will not be able to come into her own for winning a place of pride among the comity of nations. India is a land of destiny. But she cannot fulfil her destiny by imitating

the West; she must realize afresh her own Soul as revealed in her centuries of glorious culture and civilization.

But, I must frankly confess, I was shocked to be in India after several months of travel round the globe. Within a few hours of my arrival I could see that the situation, both economic and political, had considerably deteriorated during these months. We felt as if we had been suddenly dropped from heaven to earth. Not that we felt attracted towards the comforts and conveniences of the Western countries; in fact we could never adjust ourselves to them. But during all these months we had been living in the India of Gandhiji's dreams because we had been talking and discussing about it almost every hour. But this land of Gandhi for which the foreigners had so much love and admiration soon became a hard reality with its numerous weaknesses and shortcomings. We were, certainly, not prepared to be disillusioned so quickly. But there was no choice.

People in Delhi were so absorbed in their own worries and anxieties that they had hardly any time or inclination to enquire about our experiences during the tour. They had a thousand complaints against the Congress and the Government. In their opinion, there was something essentially wrong with everybody else except themselves. Each failed to realize that if everybody did his own duty honestly and efficiently, the country would improve in no time. We too, like the Chinese, are far too individualistic and self-centred; we criticize others instead of doing something about ourselves. These are habits which, undoubtedly, developed to some extent

during centuries of bad political slavery and cultural stagnation. But, after the achievement of Independence we have to shake them off if we are to rise as a great nation. I am not a pessimist; in fact, I am an incorrigible optimist and have always entertained bright hopes for the future of India. But, I think it is high time for all of us to remember that nothing valuable is ever gained without hard and honest toil.

We were, of course, glad to be back home, back among our own kith and kin, back to work once again in our own institutions. We paid our respects to the great leaders in Delhi whom we had seen before our departure. They were much worried about many problems that faced the country. But they were doing their duties with patience and perseverance night and day. And so we hastened to be back to Wardha to plunge ourselves once again into our own smaller duties and responsibilities. We went to Sevagram to pay our homage to the great Saint and the Father of our Nation. We sat in his small village hut for a few minutes in complete silence. Gandhi was dead. But his Spirit will continue to shine through the ages.

### XXX

## THE TWO WORLDS

DURING the last War, Wendell Willkie undertook a flight round the globe and passionately pleaded for '*One World*' in which 'there shall be an equality of opportunity for every race and every nation'. At that time, the United States of America and the Soviet Union were Allies and had pooled their vast and powerful resources to crush Hitlerism. The United Nations succeeded in winning the war, but miserably failed to win peace. Even before they had the opportunity of meeting round the peace table, the world witnessed the beginning of a 'cold war' between the U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. The so called 'cold war' threatened to turn into a 'hot war' at the time of the Berlin blockade and the subsequent Airlift. Somehow, good-sense prevailed and the tragedy was averted for the time being. But the tension has been growing in intensity and might any day burst into flames. The Americans sincerely feel that Russia is bent upon precipitating war for destroying the United States and gaining mastery over the entire globe. The Soviet Union declares that she has absolutely no intentions of waging a war; on the other hand she feels convinced that America is determined to force war on Russia in order to annihilate Communism at the very source. Both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. proclaim from the house-tops that they desire to outlaw war and establish lasting peace on earth. But both are engaged in making frantic efforts to manufacture more Atom and Hydrogen

bombs in the mad race of piling up deadly and disastrous weapons of war. Speaking about this armaments race, Prof. Albert Einstein recently observed: "The successful radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere, and hence the annihilation of life on earth, has been brought within the range of technical possibility . . . The idea of achieving security through national armament is at the present state of military technique a disastrous illusion. The armaments race between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., originally supposed to be a defensive measure, assumes a hysterical character." The Professor, therefore, pleaded for the solemn renunciation of violence and the promotion of mutual trust. But the whole situation seems to have passed beyond the control of any one nation and the 'two worlds' of America and Russia threaten to destroy each other in an atomic war in which victory or defeat are almost equally disastrous.

This is not a clash between two countries or races; it is an inherent conflict of two ideologies. Although geographically the world could be still called one, there are definitely two worlds of ideological nature—one dominated by Capitalism and the other ruled by Communism. Both of these worlds lie cheek by jowl in each country today; in some countries the one predominates, and in the other the second prevails. The Titanic struggle between the two goes on unabated; in each country it is this ideological conflict that permeates the social, economic, educational and political domains of national life. We could get vivid glimpses of both these worlds throughout the tour and I, therefore, sincerely feel that the idea of 'One World' under the existing circumstances

is a myth. We have to face the fact squarely that at present there are two worlds, although the hope of humanity ultimately lies in welding both of these into one.

The world of Capitalism is led by the United States of America which provides the largest scope for private enterprise and firmly believes in its immense potentialities for economic prosperity and welfare. In America, the Railways, the Bus transport, telegraph and telephones, radio and the press are all controlled and managed by private companies. It must be said to their credit that all these public utility services are run very efficiently. The Post Office is the only State concern, and unfortunately, it is the most inefficient. The people of the United States, therefore, claim that the *laissez faire* system of economy is, by far, the best. To them the maintenance of this system is the essence of democracy; any state that undermines or even restricts private enterprise is totalitarian and dictatorial. The world of Communism is led by the Soviet Union which believes in the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' for undoing the wrongs of the capitalistic order. Russia is hostile to private enterprise and the profit motive and desires to collectivize or nationalize agriculture, industry and public utility services. In fact, the idea of national economic planning originated in Russia where nothing is left to chance and the vagaries of private capitalists; all sectors of economy have to be effectively controlled, managed and planned by the State for the welfare of the masses. The Americans claim that their system of national economy is the best because it has enabled the United States

to grow into the richest country of the world. The Russians describe the American capitalistic system as 'barbaric', unjust and immoral. They, therefore, desire to uproot the bourgeois order, while the Americans want to keep their *laissez faire* system intact at all costs and dread any attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to extend her sphere of influence over Western Europe and Asia.

Frankly speaking, there is not much to choose between these two systems of Capitalism and Communism. Undiluted capitalistic order in which a few industrialists and financiers dominate national life is, certainly, a monstrosity for which I could never harbour any love or sympathy. The very system of free trade and private enterprise which has made America the wealthiest country in the world today has also caused untold hardships to many an under-developed nation; even within the United States the political power that the rich people exercise unscrupulously is a tragic mockery of all concepts of democracy. On the other hand, Communism is fast growing into a powerful monster that shamelessly crushes every opposition and reduces man into an automaton with no scope for the development of his personality. Communism forgets that Man does not live by bread alone; while assuring employment and a basic standard of living, it deprives humanity of that freedom and initiative which constitute the very essence of life. From my standpoint, both America and Russia are totalitarian; the one upholds 'totalitarian man' and the other creates 'totalitarian State'. These two totalitarian systems of man and society give birth to Total Wars which result



in the total destruction of all those values which impart meaning to human life.

How to resolve this deep-rooted conflict and clash of ideologies? After the first world war, the League of Nations attempted to perform this difficult task, but it failed. After the second world war, the United Nations Organization is trying to make the world safe for peace and democracy. But it is yet to be seen whether Lake Success will not turn into Lake Failure. My visit to Lake Success was not a source of inspiration. The U. N. O. buildings are located in a portion of an Armament factory which is still active in turning out ferocious weapons of war night and day. In one part of the building, peace is talked and in the other, war is planned; this is the basic tragedy of modern life which is the greatest menace to the success of the United Nations.

The man-in-the-street has a commonsense solution to this stupendous problem of conflict and war. While talking to a guard in the British Museum, my wife asked as to what the common man thought about the next war. "We do not want any war!" came the prompt reply. He added: "If Truman and Stalin are itching for a war, let them fight each other and decide who is stronger. But why should all of us be dragged into this quarrel?" This remark was very amusing, indeed; it reminded us of the duels that the ancient kings in India used to arrange in deciding the strength of various kingdoms. It was, surely, a very good system because the extent of violence was very much restricted and restrained. But in these days of total war nothing is spared from the scope of inhuman violence. So the common

man's commonsense solution remains a dream and a pious wish. We have to recognize the naked fact that the conflict is ideological in nature and cannot be resolved by either duels or global holocausts.

The question, therefore, arises: "Is there any other economic ideology which eschews the evils of both Capitalism and Communism and combines the good points of the two?" Upon the answer to this crucial question depends the hope of humanity for generations to come. Fortunately for us, a great leader and prophet was born in India to show a new way of life based on love, non-violence, resistance to evil and constructive approach to good. He proved by his life and work that Soul force was a stronger power than violence; even the atom bomb could not conquer the undaunted Spirit of Man. He also told us that non-violence must permeate every aspect of our national life. If war has to be abolished root and branch, the social, economic, political, educational and moral organization of a country should be non-violent in character. In other words, the roots of violence have to be traced and eradicated in all directions. Attempts to build peace on the foundation of social and economic violence are foredoomed to failure. In order to win lasting peace, we have, therefore, to set our own house in order. This was the message of that glorious leader and Saint.

The Gandhian way of life presupposes the fundamental values of Simplicity and Dignity of Labour. Both Capitalism and Communism are based on the materialistic values; they attach importance to the standard of living, while Gandhiji was anxious to raise the 'standard

of *life*,' which connotes the development of the *whole* personality of man. Mahatma Gandhi told us that true happiness and prosperity consisted not in the multiplication of wants but in their control and discrimination. Modern civilization has, like the Greek young man Narcissus, fallen in love with itself and bids fair to pine away and perish. The world is, indeed, too much with us and the mad race after earthly pleasures and material wealth throws it into the whirlpool of economic exploitation, regimentation of the masses and violent socio-political organization. We have to learn a timely lesson from the story of King Midas who hankered after gold, and if we persist in this senseless craze we will, like him, convert all human values into gold and thereby bring about the spiritual death of Man. "Of what avail is it to add and add and add?" asks Poet Tagore. "By going on increasing the volume or pitch of sound we can get nothing but a shriek; we can get music only by restraining the sound and giving it the melody of the rhythm of perfection." Without this self-restraint, the establishment of a non-violent socio-economic organization is an impossibility.

In the social sphere, the Gandhian way implies equal treatment for all human beings irrespective of any distinctions relating to race, colour, sex, religion, or social position. In a society where the coloured people are treated as inferior to the white population, any talk of peace and non-violence becomes a hypocrisy of the meanest kind. In the economic domain, Gandhian ideology means economic equality and a very large measure of industrial decentralization in the form of Co-operatives. Excepting the key industries which should be nationalized,

and, if necessary, run on a large scale, all the consumer-goods industries ought to be organized on a small-scale basis in the village cottages. Such economic decentralization would be able to provide full employment, eliminate labour-capital friction because the workers themselves will be the owners of Industrial Co-operatives, and make the country fool-proof against modern warfare of aerial bombardment. The planning of fields, factories and workshops would enable people to live a healthy life in the open air and would promote art and culture in natural surroundings. A decentralized economy discourages concentration of power in the hands of the State or a few individuals and will, consequently, be non-explosive and non-violent in nature. Centralized economy, on the contrary, is bound to be explosive and violent. To build international peace on the foundations of centralized economic organization is to build on sands.

In the educational field, Gandhian thought emphasizes the correlation of hand-culture with mind-culture or the integration of handicrafts with academic subjects. The Gandhian plan of 'New Education' consists in teaching *through* the medium of productive activity, so that as a child works and earns in plying his crafts he obtains the essential knowledge of different subjects also. Instead of becoming a burden on society, he actively participates in the production of wealth. In the political sphere, Gandhi's main contribution was the stress on decentralized democracy in the form of rural communities with a large measure of local self-government. Centralized democracy as practised in most of the countries today is failure because the masses do not feel the glow of

freedom and responsibility. According to Mahatma Gandhi, decentralized democratic organization alone can promote peace and non-exploitation. Centralization in political democracy inevitably results either in Fascism or 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Morally, the Gandhian way of life implies insistence on the purity of the means as that of the end. It has to be understood once and for all that pure aims can never be achieved with impure means. Spiritually, Gandhi believed in the Oneness of Life and he desired to realize God by identifying himself with the meanest of creatures. It is only through self-purification and selfless service that one can attune oneself to the Infinite. Gandhi went a step farther than Internationalism; he believed in 'Universalism' in the sense that all life was one not only on this planet but in the whole Universe. But this does not mean that we should depend for our daily necessities of life on distant lands. The ideals of local self-sufficiency and Universalism could be followed simultaneously without any question of contradiction or inconsistency.

Gandhism thus points out the middle way between the two worlds of today; it is capable of fusing the two conflicting ideologies into one without any confusion. It is not medieval and irrational. On the contrary, I claim that the Gandhian way is the only scientific and practical solution of almost all the ills that plague mankind in the modern world. Instead of being behind the times, Gandhi was, perhaps, a few decades or even a century ahead of us. If we do not comprehend the imperative need for decentralization of economic and political power, time would compel us to do so. The

nemesis of over-centralization and excessive mechanization would be the organization of decentralized rural units of administration and economic planning. America is already tasting the fruits of modern science and large-scale centralized industrialization, so much so that politicians of the United States are seriously thinking of constructing an underground Capital as a measure of safety against atomic warfare. They are actively planning to decentralize their giant factories into the countryside as a means of effective self-defence. I will, therefore, not be surprised if America is obliged to follow Gandhi much earlier as a necessity than does India adopt the Gandhian way of life as a matter of duty.

Gandhi is no longer a symbol of mere passive resistance; he is a dynamic and revolutionary urge for a new way of life. The two worlds of Capitalism and Communism are at loggerheads; they are engaged in a quarrel of life and death. The Gandhian way points out an alternative in which both of these ideologies can pool together their best qualities for the happiness and welfare of mankind.

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